

Collaging Nicosia

Engaging with Contested Spaces through Collage-Making

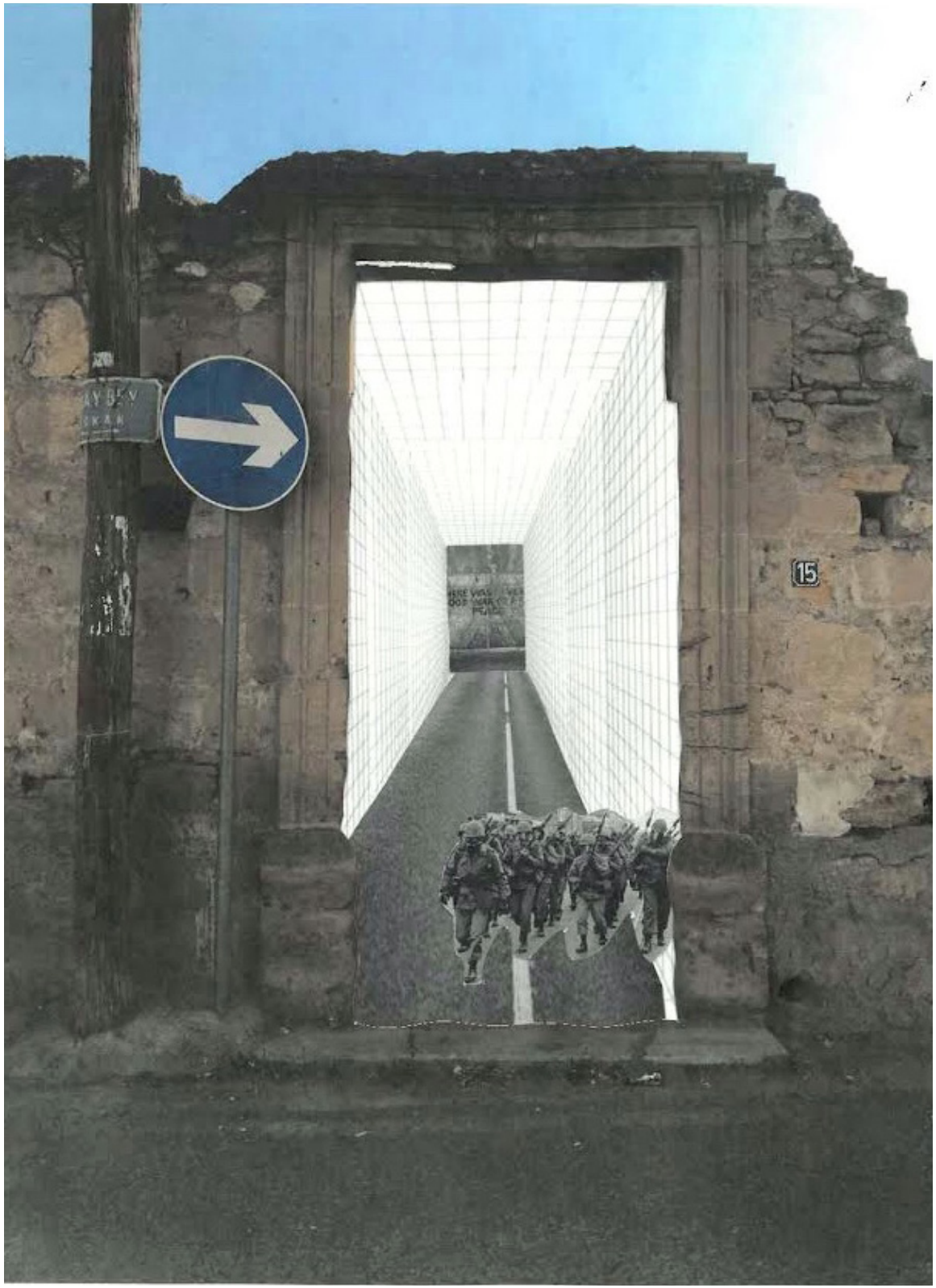
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Engaging with Contested Spaces through Collage-Making

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate how collage, a creative practice, can provide productive opportunities to engage with contentious debates in contested spaces.

Collage is approached as a multifaceted medium characterised by its capacity for fragmentation, remaking, and re-perception, offering a process-oriented approach conducive to dialogue and intellectual engagement. It allows for constant experimentation, facilitating ideas and fragments to be explored and arranged, encouraging intellectual engagement both for the collagist and among the viewers. Contested spaces, on the other hand, can be imagined as somehow counter to the nature of collage. While these spaces are defined by diverse voices, perspectives, identities, and beliefs coexisting or co-owning a space, they are often locked in conflict, exemplifying situations where differences struggle to harmonise. Drawing inspiration from Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project, which uses architecture as a means of communication and critique in war-damaged cities, this study investigates the potential of collage to engaged with contested spaces.

The testing site for this research is Nicosia, the divided capital of Cyprus, which has been politically and physically divided for over five decades between Turkish Cypriots in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south. This research employs a collage-based methodology, where collage is not only the focus but also the method of working. Various means of documentation, such as diary writing, video recording, photographing, sketching, and exhibition, are used to document the process, forming data that can be organized, communicated, and discussed.

This thesis consists of two parts. Part I focuses on theorisation about collage and contested spaces, exploring concepts of agency and examining Woods' Sarajevo Project as a case study. Part II progresses through five stages of collage-making in Nicosia, exploring the deceptive, imaginative, interpretative, spatial, and dialogical potentials inherent in collage. These stages deeply engage with the city's socio-political fabric, expanding the horizon of collage-making to encompass not only artistic expression but also description, critique, analysis, interpretation, and imagination. This study extends an invitation to researchers in contested space studies to embrace collage as a tool for examining diverse historical and contextual spaces. Through such explorations, spatial thinking can be enriched and expanded, uncovering the complexities that shape perceptions of what is considered given and unchangeable in divided cities.

"I don't feel it is necessary to know exactly what I am.
The main interest in life is to become someone else you were not in the beginning.
If you knew when you began a book what you would say at the end,
do you think you would have the courage to write it?"¹

*The realm of collage knows no bounds, for the image it creates is forever evolving.
Its process is laden with unpredictability, leaving no room to assert the completion of the image.
Rather, it serves as a stepping-stone, a preparation for what lies ahead in the next chapter.
Thus, this research has no end. It never aims to end. But it allows you to witness part of my process.*

¹ *Technologies of the Self : A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 9.

Acknowledgement

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Ceren Senturk
Newcastle, March 2024

Statement on My Position

In undertaking this research within the politically charged context of Nicosia, it is important to be transparent about my position for this research. As a Turkish researcher raised in Turkey but based in the UK for PhD research, my background naturally led me to approach the history of Cyprus from a Turkish perspective. However, my current environment has afforded me a different vantage point. It is important to recognise in Cyprus that all parties involved, including the two communities and the three guarantor powers (Greece, Turkey, and the UK), hold distinct historical viewpoints shaped by their respective interests. While my research is not aimed at somehow solving the political aspects of Cyprus' division or seeking a resolution, it does seek to explore the tapestry of Nicosia, a city imbued with echoes of its contested past.

Navigating my dual role as both insider and outsider proved beneficial and challenging. Growing up in Turkey, I was educated in the history of Cyprus within a larger narrative of Turkish history, giving me an initial Turkish-centric perspective. Yet, conducting this study in the UK granted me access to alternative sources. Acknowledging this, I endeavoured to set aside my own assumptions and sought to grasp other viewpoints. Despite my proficiency in Turkish facilitating an understanding of the Turkish Cypriot perspective, my inability to communicate in Greek proved to be a hindrance when researching the Greek Cypriot community. Additionally, as a person with a Turkish identity, accessing the southern part of the island can be challenging. Even though I can visit the northern part, I am not allowed to cross the border due to the prevailing political conflict.

Moreover, even if I had been allowed into the southern part, COVID-19 restrictions hindered my ability to physically explore the area for the first two and a half years of my research. The combination of these factors, along with the geographical distance from Nicosia, imposed limitations on my physical exploration of the area. Consequently, I found the motivation to immerse myself in the city through my imagination. It's worth noting that the collage, as a research method, alleviated this constraint by not mandating a specific location or materials. The visual language of collage not only facilitated transcending linguistic, political, and physical barriers but also underscored my role as a collagist-researcher. This project a design-based study that draws on existing literature in ethnography and social anthropology. My perspective is informed by my training as a collagist-architect. To conduct the research practice and experiment with the site comprehensively, I trained myself in making collages working with fragments of contested spaces.

Ultimately, collage is a process that interrogates rather than merely creates an image. It is inherently reflective. It extends beyond aesthetic qualities to a profound way of thinking. Throughout this journey, I've repeatedly scrutinised my own preconceptions and understandings of Nicosia. Thus, even as someone with roots in Turkey, adopting collage as a research method has brought my biases to the surface, subjecting them to scrutiny. This is evident in each collage process documented in this research.



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Glossary

Nicosia Related Terms

EOKA : Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston | National Organization of Cypriot Fighters

EOKA-B : Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston B | National Organization of Cypriot Fighters

UN : United Nations

UNFICYP : United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Enosis : Reunion of all Greek speaking people

Taksim : Division of Cyprus between Greece and Turkey

TMT : Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı | Turkish Resistance Organization

Collage Related Terms

Collagist : *A person who makes collage.*

Cut-out : *A technique involving cutting fragments from paper, photographs, or other materials to use in a collage.*

Initial cut : *The first cut was made in the process of creating a collage. This initial action sets the tone and direction for the fragment and often involves a significant degree of intuition and spontaneity*

Fragment: *A piece or part of a whole, used in collage to create or imply a larger picture. Fragments can be physical (like a piece of paper) or conceptual (like a part of a story).*

Process of observation : *The method by which a collagist observes and selects materials or subjects for their work. This process is crucial in determining the composition and thematic direction of the collage*

Collage Diary : *A personal record or collection where the collagist creates and compiles collage work regularly. It can be a means of artistic exploration, documentation, or a form of reflective journaling.*

Manipulating fragments : *The act of altering, arranging, or combining different pieces in a collage. This manipulation is central to the creative process, allowing the collagist to experiment with form and meaning.*

Pasta : *In the context of collage, this could refer to the incorporation of physical pasta shapes as a material, adding texture and an unconventional element to the composition.*

Material Research : *The process of exploring and understanding various materials that can be used in collage. This research is key to discovering new possibilities in texture, color, and form.*

Glueing : *The act of adhering different elements together in a collage. Glueing is a fundamental technique in collage-making, crucial for layering and securing the components.*

Layering: *A technique in collage where materials are overlaid to create depth, complexity, and narrative. Each layer can reveal or conceal aspects, contributing to the overall effect.*

Act of initiation : *The moment or process where a collagist begins a new collage. This act can be both a physical start, like making the first cut, and a conceptual one, like forming the initial idea.*

Methaphorical dialogue : *The interaction of various elements in a collage that creates a conversation beyond their literal meaning. This dialogue often emerges from the juxtaposition and association of disparate materials, forming new meanings and interpretations.*

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to investigate how collage, a creative practice, can provide productive opportunities to engage with contentious debates in contested spaces.

Collage is embraced here as a multifaceted medium for research. It is a creative practice characterised by its inherent capacity for fragmentation, remaking, and re-perception. Collage does not focus solely on the creation of a final image. It takes a process-oriented approach that can encourage dialogue. The approach creates an unconstrained ground, encouraging intellectual engagement both for the collagist and among viewers. The practice allows for constant experimentation, facilitating ideas and fragments to be explored and arranged. It offers an experimental laboratory. Collage is inherently a medium which brings together different ideas, views, elements, and thoughts without any limitation.

Contested spaces, on the other hand, can be imagined as somehow counter to the nature of collage. While these spaces are defined by diverse voices, perspectives, identities, and beliefs that strive for coexistence, they are often locked in conflict, exemplifying situations where differences struggle to harmonise. These spaces are governed by rules, frequently rejecting the concept of multiplicity in favour of forced homogeneity. While peace processes can be pursued within such spaces, their success often falters due to the lack of an autonomous and multidisciplinary approach capable of effectively navigating these intricacies.¹

Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo project of 1993 offers an alternative architectural methodology for understanding and reshaping contested spaces in war-damaged cities.² Woods introduces the terms 'freespaces' and 'heterarchy' to promote societal healing, employing architecture as a tool for communication and critique. His use of drawing, collage, and montage-like methods exemplifies an interdisciplinary approach, expanding the boundaries of architectural presentation and conveying the dualities and transformations inherent in contested spaces.

Drawing on key components of Woods' ways of engaging with contested spaces, this research suggests that collage - with its open, heterogeneous, and fragmented nature - can be an alternative way of engaging with such spaces where the co-existence of boundaries, conflicts, and differences are challenging. It examines the role of collage in navigating the intricacies of contested spaces, investigating how the practice, along with fragments of contested spaces themselves, can transform and enrich research and conversation. This study conducts an experimental examination of the dynamic interplay between collage and contested spaces, seeking to understand how this interaction can produce insightful research outcomes. The research thus explores collage as a multidisciplinary medium for

1 Mike Morrissey and Frank Gaffikin, "Planning for Peace in Contested Space", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (2006); Frank Gaffikin and Mike Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities: Collaborative Shaping of Contested Space*, *Planning in Divided Cities: Collaborative Shaping of Contested Space*, 2011.

2 Lebbeus Woods, "War and Architecture", in *Pamphlet Architecture 15* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).

engaging with contested spaces, offering a holistic alternative to conventional methods that often face limitations.

Conducting research through one's own creative practice requires an in-depth and comprehensive examination of the research problem. It emphasises the necessity of harmonising both the physical and subjective components of the creative process. This approach aligns with the principles of practice-based research,³ wherein the researcher analyses, creates, and documents their creative process. Thus, I use diverse methods of documentation, such as diary writing, video recording, photographing, sketching, and exhibition. These methods serve as a form of data that can be organised, communicated, and discussed.

This creative practice research engages with Nicosia, the divided capital of Cyprus, as a testing space. Nicosia presents a unique case, being politically and physically divided for over five decades between the Turkish Cypriots in the north and the Greek Cypriots in the south, with two societies living parallel yet distinct lives. My personal background and the historical ties of Cyprus to Turkey have influenced my decision to focus on Nicosia, providing a unique viewpoint informed by this interconnected history, and enriching the research with a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the city's complex socio-political fabric.

This thesis consists of two parts. While collagists recognise the importance of the subjects or materials they choose to work with in their creative practice, there remains a gap in explicitly exploring how important this practice can be for creative processes and research. Thus, Part I develops a theoretical framework for examining creative practice in contested spaces. It describes collage and contested spaces and interrelates these terms with the notion of agency. It later examines creative practices produced during the siege of Sarajevo with the focus of Woods' Sarajevo Project, serving as a case study for navigating these concepts.

Part II focuses on my own collage-making process. It progresses through five stages of collage-making in Nicosia. Each stage informs the subsequent one, embodying an iterative approach where each experience influences both the form and thematic content of the resulting collages. These stages develop on exploring the deceptive, imaginative, interpretative, spatial, and dialogical potentials of collage, respectively. While each chapter focuses on specific characteristics of collage, the collage-making processes in every stage collectively embodies all these attributes. The experiments suggest that collage can be a productive medium for researchers, architects, urbanists, designers, and enablers.

3 Murray Fraser, ed., *Design Research in Architecture : An Overview*, Design Research in Architecture (Surray: Ashgate, 2013); Christopher Frayling, "Research in Art and Design", *Royal College of Art Research Papers* 1, no. 1 (1993); Christopher Frayling et al., *Practice-Based Doctorates in The Creative Performing Arts and Design* (Lichfield: UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997); Yasser Megahed, "On Research by Design", *Arq: Architectural Research Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (2017).

Aim and research questions

As already stated, this research aims to investigate how collage, a creative practice, can provide productive opportunities to engage with contentious debates in contested spaces.

Collage is often recognised as a method primarily used in artistic production. Discussions and writings on its application in spatial research are often approached from a narrow perspective. In particular, using collage as a design research tool in contested spaces is scarcely explored. Indeed, its conceptual significance in the creative process is often overlooked. In general, collage has primarily been valued for its capacity to engage participants as a mode of communication rather than for its conceptual possibilities. The role of collage, therefore, tends to be limited to physical rather than conceptual characteristics. This study stimulates further discussion of the practice's potential among architectural researchers and spatial practitioners, so that possibilities for working with collage in contested spaces can become more extensively tested and shared.

As a collagist-researcher, I argue that the fragments that create a collage are important not only for their practical qualities, which help the collagist to shape a visually pleasing image, but also for their expressive power. This can lead the collagist to conceptualise and interrogate knowledge within the research context. Collage represents more than the mere creation of an artistic artefact. It symbolises a dynamic method of inquiry and interpretation, involving an experimental and eclectic assemblage of fragments. Each fragment within a collage is a carrier of unique contexts and narratives, not just a component of aesthetic value. When these fragments are removed from their original environments and juxtaposed in a collage, they merge to create a rich tapestry of meanings and connotations. This may also be particularly significant in contested spaces, where meanings are complex and multi-dimensional.

The process of selecting and organising these fragments is a form of critical inquiry and exploration. The collagist-researcher engages in a thoughtful decision-making process, where the inclusion and placement of each fragment reflect specific viewpoints and lines of inquiry. This 'thinking through making'⁴ approach allows for the development and refinement of conceptual ideas through the physical act of collage creation. Additionally, the expressive power of these fragments lies in their ability to evoke emotions and provoke thought. The visual impact of a collage, shaped by the combination of these diverse fragments, goes beyond traditional academic discourse, communicating ideas and narratives in an intuitively accessible yet impactful manner. In contested spaces, where emotional resonance and experiential understanding are crucial, the expressive qualities of collage fragments are particularly instrumental. They offer a unique perspective for engaging with and understanding complexities. Therefore, the multifunctionality of collage fragments underscores their potential as a research tool in architectural and spatial studies. This potential is further explored in the next chapter, focusing on the agency of fragments within this research.

4 Tim Ingold, *Making : Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, 2013.

To address my research aim, I asked four initiating questions in relation to Nicosia:

1. To investigate the contested past, I ask: *How can collage serve as a means to engage with intricate history of a contested past?*
2. To grasp the impact of conflict on the city, I ask: *How can experimental collage-making be used to understand the divided city of Nicosia?*
3. To engage with the peace-making process, I ask: *How can collage be employed to understand what has been happening in the peace-making process and foster new interpretations of the transformed post-conflict texture of Nicosia?*
4. To understand ways of working with collage in divided cities, I ask: *How can collage provide an alternative approach to working in contested spaces?*

It is important to mention that these questions were not defined before embarking on collage-making. Instead, they emerged through creative practice, during research and making. The process of making collages generates questions, prompting deeper inquiry into the process itself and the context of the research.

This research initially focused on comprehending the discourse surrounding Nicosia. Subsequent collage-making processes then followed the evolving insights and my personal experiences with collage. Therefore, the making processes discussed below followed one another and developed cumulatively. This sequential progression is extensively detailed in the second part of this thesis, where each process nurtures the subsequent ones.

Upon completing the collage-making processes centred around above questions, I encountered an internal question. While this research primarily centres around my own experiences in collage-making, my own role prompted concerns about the closedness of my potential creation process. To address this, I opened my creative practices to interpretation by others and curated an exhibition showcasing works still in process. Exhibitions, typically associated with the realm of art, can also be used as research tools, becoming arenas where artefacts are experienced and explored.⁵ This approach brought my collages into dialogue with others, allowing me to experience and assess the dialogical potential of collage. It provided insights into how viewers perceive collages assembled from fragments of contested spaces and how these fragments can initiate further dialogues.

An additional research question thus emerged:

5. *When viewers encounter collages created from fragments of contested spaces, how do these fragments influence their interpretations and thoughts?*

5 K. Niedderer, M.A.R. Biggs, and M. Ferris, "The Research Exhibition: Context, Interpretation, and Knowledge Creation" 0120 (2006); Bruce W.Ferguson, "Exhibition Rhetorics", in *Thinking about Exhibition*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W.Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 126–36; Nithikul Nimkulrat, *Paperness: Expressive Material in Textile Art from an Artist's Viewpoint* (Keuruu, Finland: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2009).

This question recognises that fragments from contested spaces play a pivotal role in shaping viewers' perceptions of collages. I explore how the qualities inherent in collage - particularly its visual and tactile attributes - impact the emotions, thoughts, sensations, and cognitions of both the collagist and the viewer as they engage with fragments and the collages made from them.

Nicosia as a testing site

I began my research with an interest in contested spaces that emerged out of my previous architectural studies, and a powerful sense of architecture's opportunities to effect positive change. The selection of Nicosia was not random. It shares characteristics with other "divided cities", including Belfast, Jerusalem, Mostar, Sarajevo, and Beirut, which have been the subject of growing literature on persistent ethnic conflicts and long-term divisions.⁶ But, although each divided city is unique, Nicosia can be seen as an extreme, which provides a clear opportunity to observe the complex interaction between physical and spatial elements of contested spaces and their intangible dimensions, such as social, political and cultural conflicts. Nevertheless, Nicosia has received relatively less attention than other 'divided cities', possibly due to its ongoing political stalemate and relatively isolated context.

There is a dearth of research that focuses explicitly on Nicosia, particularly from a spatial perspective. While existing studies, primarily conducted by anthropologists and political scholars, have extensively examined key issues - related to peace and reconciliation, displacement, life during and after conflict, memory and forgetting, and border and civil society initiatives⁷ - they tend to lack a comprehensive approach that considers the city from a broader viewpoint. Nicosia, thus, presents a promising terrain for multidisciplinary experimentation. Through creative practice, I draw upon this corpus of knowledge, recontextualise it, and reinterpret it. Such an approach offers the potential to explore Nicosia's distinctive spatial and architectural characteristics through a creative lens, uncovering alternative insights and perspectives that contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the city.

Furthermore, the site holds a personal significance for me due to my Turkish heritage. My educational background in Turkey exposed me to the intricate history of Cyprus, albeit from a particular perspective. This exploration has revealed to me the multifaceted nature of Cyprus' history, with diverse narratives presented by various groups, such as Turks, Turkish Cypriots, Greeks, Greek Cypriots, and British. The rich, multicultural, and multi-layered history of Cyprus presents an important foundation for design-oriented

6 Jon Calame and Ester Charlesworth, *Divided Cities : Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*, City in the Twenty-First Century Book Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Christine Leuenberger, "Mapping Divided Cities and Their Separation Walls: Berlin and Jerusalem", *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, no. 65 (2016): 86; Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Plan. Divid. Cities Collab. Shap. Contested Sp.*

7 Anita Bakshi, *Topographies of Memories, Topographies of Memories*, 2017.; Alev Adil, "An Architecture of Forgetting: Towards a Poetics of the 'Dead Zone' of Nicosia", in *Memory and Nostalgia*, ed. Atilla Silku, Murat Erdem, and Patrick Folk (Izmir: Ege University Eleventh International Cultural Studies Symposium, 2007); Calame and Charlesworth, *Divided Cities : Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*.

research. As a result, I have developed a personal concern with the history of Nicosia, motivating my desire to find creative ways to explore, imagine, and reimagine its past and present despite the physical and political barriers that exist. Although the ongoing political conflict imposes physical divisions that prevent me from crossing the border, I have found a means of exploring and envisioning the city through my collage practice.

During the research, unforeseen challenges arose, notably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. My Turkish heritage and the political tensions between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus already placed restrictions on my physical access to the southern part of Nicosia. These limitations were further compounded by global lockdowns, rendering travel and direct engagement with the city impossible. These barriers have not hindered, but rather reshaped my approach to studying Nicosia. Confined by physical boundaries and travel bans, I discovered that Nicosia transcended into a space of imagination and intellectual exploration. My creative and academic endeavours thus began to navigate the city's fabric without the constraints of borders or political divisions. By embracing physical limitations as an integral part of my research methodology, I was able to delve into a more conceptually grounded exploration of Nicosia. The city, thus, has evolved into a canvas for my imagination, where its history, conflicts, and cultural complexities are examined and reimaged through an alternative lens.

Practice and reflection

This research has engaged with collage-making as a reflective practice research inquiry. The approach implies active engagement and dialogue with the practice. To this end, I embrace the role of both researcher and collagist. A reflective methodology allows me to not only make collages but also closely observe their creation in real-time.⁸ It ensures my deep immersion in the act of creation, a fundamental component of my research inquiries. This parallels ideas of autoethnography.⁹ As the processes of collage-making gradually took shape, my interpretations and reflections on the images and their production evolved.

Within this context, I adopt the identity of a “*reflective practitioner*”,¹⁰ who documents her creative work as an integral part of the research, using it as a testing ground for ideas and concepts. Writing about one's own creative endeavours offers a unique opportunity for introspection, to examine the nuances of the creative process, including its challenges, problems, trials, errors, and successes. It facilitates an exploration into the how, where, and why of each occurrence, serving as a source of insight. This, in turn, fosters the refinement of subsequent productions, ultimately enhancing the overall inquiry.

8 Donald A Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner : How Professionals Think in Action* (Aldershot [England]: Arena, 1995).

9 Tony E Adams, *Autoethnography*, Series in Understanding Qualitative Research, 2015.

10 The term “Reflective practitioner” was introduced by American scholar Donald Schön (1983/1995) to describe a professional who can introspectively examine their practical experiences. This involves ongoing self-inquiry into the reasons, methods, and contexts of their actions, enabling them to extract valuable lessons from real-world practice and enhance their future performance. This concept underscores the importance of learning from one's own professional experiences. In Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner : How Professionals Think in Action*.

Tim Ingold, an anthropologist, supports this approach, emphasising *learning through making* that represents concrete experiences and active participation as tools for acquiring knowledge, skills, and a deeper understanding of the world.¹¹ According to his perspective, knowledge is not confined solely to the realm of our minds; it manifests through the actions of practitioners. Thus, direct involvement in creative practice provides practitioners with a tangible, first-hand comprehension of materials and processes. Making becomes an active, participatory endeavour where practitioners actively shape knowledge through direct interaction with materials and their immediate environment. Moreover, the act of creation is inherently contextual. The practitioner's surroundings, cultural influences, and the materials at hand all leave their mark on the creative process. As a result, the direct interaction of the researcher with the act of doing makes this process of doing a mode of contextualisation, self-exploration, learning, representing knowledge and generating knowledge.

This dynamic interplay between the creative act and its context significantly influences the research process as they continually shape each other. The act of individual creation naturally fosters reflection and adaptation. When faced with challenges and obstacles, practitioners adjust and refine their approaches, leading to deeper learning and more effective problem-solving. As a result, conducting research through one's own professional practice establishes a unique and distinct role for the researcher. I simultaneously inhabit intersecting roles of collagist and researcher in this project. This dual identity allows for a comprehensive exploration of the creative process, where the act of creation is not just a subject of investigation, but also a means to facilitate a deeper understanding of architectural research through practice.

A collagist conducting research

As a collagist engaged in research, I also play the role of collage initiator. My approach to beginning each collage project involves recognising the fragment. Although I employ various methods, my typical process entails physically exploring and manipulating different fragments until I encounter the *one* that resonates with my creative vision. However, articulating precisely why a specific fragment proves more suitable than others remains a question that defies a complete answer. This is because the initial fragment that starts the collage is not the most important thing in collage-making; what truly matters is its power to influence the collagist and set a creative *thought* in train. In collage-making, fragments can be added or removed at any time. The fragment that originally starts the collage may either be discarded later or concealed beneath subsequent layers, becoming invisible. Therefore, the act of selecting the first fragment for a collage seems not to be a delicate subjective action. However, what I can assert is that the right fragment possesses a unique potential to resonate with my imagination and initiate the creative journey. When a fragment aligns with the qualities I envision, it becomes the catalyst, and the collage continues to evolve accordingly.

11 Ingold, *Making : Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*.

The purpose behind the collages created within the scope of this research is not to produce a final image for public presentation. The collage experiments conducted within the framework of this design-based research each follow distinct processes. However, identifying the initial fragment for each collage-making process is the same. In every collage-making process, once the collage has been initiated, it is shaped in such a way that it serves the research, and a composition is formed. It is worth noting that the focus on the impact of the composition sets apart the role of the collagist in this particular research, because this research's primary focus lies not on individual fragments within the collages but on their state of fragmentation. Fragmentation, which does not refer to a division of a whole part but as a composition of parts, begins with collecting various images selected without predefined criteria. Then, the construction of each collage proceeds in tandem with my emotional response and interpretation of the images. Importantly, within the overall context of this research, each new collage's evolution is influenced by the outcomes and analyses of preceding experiments, giving rise to inquiries that guide the direction of the next endeavour. These inquiries shape the initial concept for the subsequent collage. This demonstrates the dynamic interplay between creative production and the research's objectives and questions, highlighting how creative practice can adapt to and redefine the research's purpose.

A writer reflecting on my own practice

This research always provides reflective textual accounts alongside collages to document the process of creation and interpretation, from the perspective of the collagist as an initial viewer.¹² Explanations in the form of written or verbal descriptions can serve as a means of analysing practitioners' unique creative processes while also effectively conveying them to others, including audiences, users, fellow artists, and designers. This disclosure not only assists practitioners in comprehending the creative procedures involved in their work but also enables fellow creative practitioners to gain insights and perspectives arising from genuine creative processes, thereby empowering them to innovate and create their own works of art or design. Textual accounts thus significantly contribute to the development of creative practice.

In my research practice, I employ my voice in two phases: as a practitioner, and then as (initial) interpreter. First, I provide written documentation of the collage-making process, articulating it from a subjective vantage point. This subjective reflection is moulded by personal sentiments, thoughts, and the specific temporal and spatial context in which the collage comes into being. This mode of expression can be seen as technical, emphasising the finer nuances of the process. Secondly, as the collage undergoes conceptualisation within the realm of research, it assumes the identity of a work. In this new guise, I undertake the role of its initial interpreter within the research context. This phase leans towards introspection, directing attention towards the contextual framework rather than procedural intricacies, and forming *reveries* in motion.

12 Nigel Cross, "Designerly Ways of Knowing: Design Discipline versus Design Science", *Design Issues* 17, no. 3 (2001): 49–55.

Collage offers a process where the intangible becomes tangible and visible through remains, traces and artefacts. I therefore refer to the exploration of Nicosia's contested spaces through the fragments as a *reverie*. This term is derived from the philosophical concepts of French philosopher and literary critic Gaston Bachelard, signifying a state of deep contemplation, or daydreaming crucial to the creative process. In his work, *The Poetics of Reverie*, Bachelard applies this term as the profound implications of the imagination as a fundamental aspect of human experience, particularly its relation to creativity and artistic expression.¹³ He posits reverie as a mental state in which the boundaries between reality and imagination are blurred, allowing a profound interaction with the unconscious and the reservoir of memories and emotions contained within it.

In this context, reverie transcends being merely a 'dream' or a metaphorical fiction. It emerges as a concrete, and maybe authentic, experience. In my collage-making experience, reveries become an interpretation of my active engagement with the palpable fragments of spaces and human experience that remain within the physical and cultural landscape of the city. Thus, the use of Bachelard's concept of reverie resides within a philosophical framework that celebrates the profound interplay between imagination, memory, and the material world, enriching the narrative of Nicosia's discovery. It encompasses stories, memories, experiences and the past, manifested in the form of inanimate objects in the spaces of Nicosia. Reverie becomes not merely a passive indulgence in fantasy, but a dynamic process of self-discovery and introspection vital to creative endeavour. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that while the interpretation of the work is contextualised, it is again inevitably influenced by my own subjective sentiments and reflections.

In this practice-based research, I also refer to Jane Rendell's concept of site-writing to assess my relationship with collage practice. Rendell explores a form of situated criticism that aligns the critic's position with art objects and architectural spaces and the site of writing itself.¹⁴ In *Site-Writing*, Rendell adopts Mieke Bal's concept of art-writing, positioning the critic as a site for interpreting artwork, and extends site-writing to encompass "the material, emotional, political and conceptual sites of the artwork's construction, exhibition and documentation, as well as those remembered, dreamed and imagined by the artist, critic and other viewers".¹⁵ Bal notes that "the question becomes not where the work comes from, but what the work is, means, and does in the present time of viewing".¹⁶ However, Rendell's site-writing enables the individual to reflect upon their own subject position in relation to their objects and fields of endeavour, as well as how their writing can materially relate to fields of inquiry and audiences, including the medium and other conditions of the media used.

13 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie : Childhood, Language and the Cosmos* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1971).

14 Jane Rendell, "Critical Spatial Practice: Curating, Editing, Writing", in *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, ed. Michèle Rugg, Judith, Sedgwick (Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2008), 68–69.

15 Jane Rendell, *Site-Writing: The Architectural of Art Criticism* (London : New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 1.

16 Mieke Bal, *Looking in : The Art of Viewing*, Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture (London: Routledge, 2001), xii.

The collages created within the framework of this research are inevitably the product of a specific moment and space. This is because collage does not represent an image; it represents a process. In this context, my collages can be seen as a reflection of the moment within the process, with the collagist as the creator of this process. In other words, the collagist exists directly within that moment. It is in this light that Rendell's writings have been instrumental in documenting this process. Drawing inspiration from her teachings, I seek to present my interpretations of collage not merely as fragments but also from a more subjective perspective. I explore the material, emotional, political, and conceptual associations of these fragments within my own mind, seeking to connect them to the research context. This approach facilitates both the documentation of the process and its interpretation within the research context, whether as a collagist or as the initial viewer.

Research through practice: Practice-based research

Design is increasingly recognised as a research method in architecture.¹⁷ Design research offers a variety of approaches that harmonise general research principles with the design itself.¹⁸ Christopher Frayling has proposed three models for design research: research 'into' design, research 'for' design, and research 'through' design.¹⁹ In each category, the relationship between the act of design and the process of knowledge creation differs.

Research 'into' design is the most straightforward of Frayling's categories. In this approach, the researcher has an outside perspective. Research into design accepts design as an explicit act of knowledge development, and during the design process or after design, the researcher seeks to find methods to develop or refine the observed activity. This approach employs methods familiar to other research fields, such as the humanities, social sciences, or technology-based research.²⁰ Research 'for' design focuses on creating artefacts. Knowledge becomes embodied within visual or imaginative communication within these artefacts.²¹ This type of research deviates from traditional notions of academia and may not fit within academic conventions. Academic research may involve design practice, as defined in the research 'through' design category, but collecting reference materials for creative practice may not qualify as academic research.²²

Research 'through' design is a more inclusive category, using design to conduct research and communicate findings in writing. This approach establishes its own research methodology, allowing for knowledge questioning, extension, and critique within the process. This methodology may appear experimental, non-systematic, designer-driven,

17 Johan Verbeke, "This Is Research by Design", in *Design Research in Architecture: An Overview*, ed. Murray Fraser (Ashgate, 2013), 137–59; Megahed, "On Research by Design."

18 Megahed, "On Research by Design."

19 Frayling, "Research in Art and Design."

20 Shane Murray, "Design Research: Translating Theory into Practice", in *Design Research in Architecture: An Overview*, ed. Murray Fraser (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 96.

21 Frayling, "Research in Art and Design."

22 Nimkulrat, *Paperness: Expressive Material in Textile Art from an Artist's Viewpoint*, 32.

and challenging to understand.²³ Thus, it necessitates critical thinking to transfer the generated knowledge. However, this approach recognises research and practice as interrelated processes, bridging the base of research through practice.

Creative practice research, or “research ‘*through*’ design”, as Frayling terms it, connects the researcher’s professional expertise with the academic realm, considering the creative practice as a research tool. In the UK, this type of research is called ‘practice-based research’. According to the UK Council for Postgraduate Education Report, a practice-based PhD, for example, advances knowledge through practice, featuring original creative work in the application for examination. This work demonstrates attributes like originality, mastery, and contribution to the field through critical evaluation and contextualisation of the creative work. The report suggests:

...the practice-based doctorate advances knowledge partly by means of practice. An original/creative piece of work is included in the submission for examination. It is distinct in that significant aspects of the claim for doctoral characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work...Practice-based doctoral submissions must include a substantial contextualisation of the creative work. This critical appraisal or analysis not only clarifies the basis of the claim for the originality and location of the original work, it also provides the basis for a judgement as to whether general scholarly requirements are met. This could be defined as judgement of the submission as a contribution to knowledge in the field, showing doctoral level powers of analysis and mastery of existing contextual knowledge, in a form which is accessible to and auditable by knowledgeable peers.²⁴

In design-based research, creative practice is thus integral to research. It associates practice with knowledge production, and knowledge with practice execution. The practices conducted in this research, due to their unpredictability and openness to various possibilities, have helped to formulate subsequent research questions in the design research process. This, in turn, leads to reflections that suggest the next steps in the research endeavour, advancing the process design inquiry. Consequently, design-based research can be aptly described as an investigative and research process in which designers and researchers leverage design as a central framework for activities like critical thinking, written analysis, rigorous testing, meticulous validation, constructive discussions, informed debates, tangible realisations, and thorough validation of design concepts. Practice thus not only serves as a means to test and generate knowledge but also concurrently to evaluate and enrich existing knowledge.

Creative practice research represents a dynamic and multifaceted approach in architectural studies, adeptly blending the rigour of academic inquiry with the fluidity and innovation

23 Frayling, “Research in Art and Design”.

24 Frayling et al., *Practice-Based Doctorates in The Creative Performing Arts and Design*, 14.

characteristic of design processes.²⁵ This methodology harmonises practice-based and practice-led research, approaches known for their broad application yet eluding a single definition.²⁶ At its core lies the concept of the 'reflective practitioner', as popularised by Donald Schön, highlighting a dual process of reflection: 'in action' and 'on action'.²⁷ The former involves intuitive, real-time engagement within the design process, weaving together explicit and tacit knowledge, while the latter pertains to post-experience reflective analysis, yielding deep insights into the practitioner's actions and their broader implications. These reflective practices actively inform and shape the design process, fostering a rich environment for inquiry and knowledge generation.

This thesis is a creative practice research, and collage is the creative practice of this research. In this context, collage plays a central role in the methodological framework, extending beyond its traditional artistic confines. It serves as a bridge between artistic expression and scholarly inquiry, embodying a unique fusion of creativity and research. The collagist, here, embodies the dual roles of a creative practitioner and a researcher, engaging in reflective practice throughout the design and research process. This integration allows for an in-depth engagement in reflective practice, permeating both the design and research processes. Collage, therefore, emerges not only as a tool for exploring knowledge but also as an influential medium for shaping that knowledge. By positioning collage as creative practice of this study, the research transcends traditional academic boundaries, evolving into a transformative process that redefines the contours and potentials of architectural research.

Collage-based research

Collage serves as a valuable tool for architectural research through practice. It surpasses conventional research paradigms, allowing researchers to integrate visual, tactile, and spatial elements into their research. This research proposes collage as a tool for architectural research in contested spaces to bring together artistic and creative methodologies and to explore complex spatial, cultural, and design phenomena. This is what I refer to as 'collage-based research'. Rather than being a matter of 'either/or', or 'and', it adopts an 'if' approach. In this context, collage signifies a dynamic and exploratory medium, where collage-based research serves not as a rigid formula of 'either/or' choices or mere combinations of 'and', but as a flexible, scenario-based exploration, enabling collagists to delve into the multitude of possibilities and outcomes in contested spaces, and thus, uncovering new layers of understanding in architectural research.

In this collage-based research, collage, as a creative practice, yields a multifaceted combination of various texts and images into a single work, as an alternative model for examining contested spaces through an architectural lens. This model values diverse perspectives and intentionally includes societally non-dominant ways of understanding, such as those of the visual arts. Collage, therefore, can offer a particularly suitable

25 Megahed, "On Research by Design".

26 Megahed.

27 Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*.

approach for postcolonial inquiries into ethnic, cultural, religious, and social conflicts - the contested space shaped by various cultures and non-dominant knowledge systems.

A postcolonial context

The term 'postcolonial' refers to the period following the end of colonialism, characterised by the establishment of colonies in another space by a formal political power, often driven by vested interests.²⁸ However, as geographer Tariq Jazeel notes, the term 'postcolonial' implies more than the mere end of colonial rule. He notes that even after the departure of colonial administrators, like viceroys or governors, the effects of colonial power persist.²⁹ In this broader context, 'postcolonial' is a term that critically engages with the entire spectrum of culture impacted by the imperial process, spanning from the onset of colonisation to contemporary times.³⁰ It emphasises the importance of acknowledging, deconstructing, and critically addressing the historical, cultural, and power dynamics that emerged during colonial rule.

In Nicosia, postcolonialism manifests itself in a unique way. Following the Ottoman Empire's cession of Cyprus to the British in 1878, the island remained under British colonial rule until 1960, profoundly influencing its architecture, urban planning, and cultural ethos. However, although there have been differences in political and social regimes during this period, administrations have progressed by preserving the institutional systems of their predecessors.³¹ For example, in the early years of British rule, the institutional systems from Ottoman rule were preserved; only the administrators were changed, maintaining the existing organisation.³² Consequently, Nicosia was shaped not only by the dominant power during colonisation but also retained lingering influences from previous eras, even in the post-colonial period. The city's society, culture, and political structure have been transformed through stratification. The physical and symbolic fragments in the city reflect the imprints of previous societies that lived there and the deep-rooted colonial influences on space and identity, while at the same time creating a rich layered texture. Therefore, Nicosia presents an intriguing case study for collage-based research, offering multi-layered fragments on contested spaces within a postcolonial context.

Collage as a research practice in various disciplines

Drawing insights from diverse disciplines, this section will demonstrate collage's versatility as a medium for practice-based research. I will introduce how researchers across various disciplines can harness collage as a unique tool to understand, visualise, and address complex spatial, social, cultural, educational, and design challenges.

28 Tariq Jazeel, *Postcolonialism*, Key Ideas in Geography, 2019, 4.

29 Jazeel, *Postcolonialism*.

30 Ibid.

31 Asu Tozan and Günkut Akin, "İngiliz Sömürge Dönemi ve Sömürge Sonrası Kuzey Kıbrısta Kent ve Mimarlık," *Urbanization and Architectural Developments in North Cyprus during British Colonial and Postcolonial Periods*, 2009.

32 Tozan and Akin.

Collage is about juxtaposing fragments to encourage encounters and enable ideas to engage with one another.³³ It represents a multidimensional and interdisciplinary system of creative organisation. Collage does not merely present an image through fragments; it provides an intuitive glimpse into how a world can be constructed. It introduces the existence of an alternate world through these fragments. As Russian artist Kazimir Malevich aptly put it, collage is “an intuitive self-definition of the artist among objects”.³⁴ However, collage is not confined to the artist’s world; it is shaped and multiplied through the viewer’s perspective. In other words, it not only proclaims the continuity of realms but also highlights their interconnectedness, offering a world accessible to all. Therefore, although traditionally regarded as an artistic practice, collage has found utility as a versatile research method across various disciplines.

The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods defines collage as “an arts-based research approach meaning-making through the juxtaposition of a variety of pictures, artefacts, natural objects, words, phrases, textiles, sounds, and stories”.³⁵ Unlike conventional research methods, collage does not aim for a direct transmission of information; instead, it seeks to create metaphorical and evocative narratives. Readers, audiences, and practitioners are encouraged to derive their own meanings from the research topic. Thus, collage can construct meanings related to the research question, process, participants, and emerging themes and help to manage the process of a research inquiry.³⁶

Artist and academic Willem de Bruijn emphasises the expressive function of collage, asserting that learning can be facilitated through visual images.³⁷ In his research, he explores how images can foster critical visual thinking skills in architectural education and theory through a pedagogical approach to collage. He suggests collage can challenge the predominance of verbal evaluation methods prevalent in contextual and critical studies. As part of his research, de Bruijn organised a collage workshop involving both undergraduate and postgraduate students. In this workshop, students were tasked with contemplating their own design projects, creating keywords for their thoughts, and searching for images related to these keywords. These images served as the foundation for their collages, and de Bruijn considers the image search process as integral to the thinking and learning process. These collages and the process of researching and making are not merely supplementary data, but rather, they are considered the central data of his research. Through their analysis, de Bruijn demonstrates how collage can construct arguments and convey meaning. Furthermore, he notes that English as a Second Language students and those with dyslexia or writing concerns found it easier to express themselves using

33 Rona Cran, *Collage in Twentieth-Century Art, Literature and Culture : Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, Frank O'Hara, and Bob Dylan*, 2014.

34 Cran, 4–5.

35 Lisa M. Given, ed., *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Los Angeles, [Calif.] ; London: SAGE, 2008), 94.

36 Given, *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*.

37 Willem Bruijn, “The Collage Workshop: Exploring the Image as Argumentative Tool”, *The International Journal of Art & Design Education* 39, no. 2 (2020): 290–305.

this method, suggesting that collage can serve as both a highly accessible and inclusive medium and a research language.

Donna Davis and Lynn Butler-Kisber underscore the analytical potential of collage in qualitative research, describing collage as a contextualisation strategy akin to note-taking in qualitative research.³⁸ Like de Bruijn, they employed collage as a contextualising strategy in a participatory research study involving an artist/graduate student and a teacher/researcher. Four collages created by the participants were analysed as part of the research to determine that collages can be a research tool that facilitates nonlinear thinking, and tangibly captures the nuanced qualities of emotions and experiences. Kathleen Vaughan, an artist and scholar, follows a similar approach, presenting research analysed through collaged images.³⁹ However, instead of collaborating with participants, Vaughan focuses on her own collage-making process. She used a photo album belonging to her father as the basis for her collage-making process, reflecting, revealing, and documenting her creative journey, which brings transparency to her inquiry. Her collage work indicates that the researcher engages in an inquisitive, experimental study through her practice, aligning with contemporary trends in social science and the humanities.

Collage can take various forms beyond image-making. Sociologist Monika Kostera, for instance, asked her participants to write fictional stories on a specific topic, using these narratives as a starting point for her research.⁴⁰ She revisited these stories to comprehend how individuals perceived the worlds they inhabited and utilised them to connect with her research – a process she terms “*narrative collage*”. Magda Dragu, on the other hand, explores the relationship between collage and music, emphasising that musical collage may serve as a metaphor used by musicologists and music theorists to reference techniques in which musical phrases and motifs are abruptly juxtaposed, a concept she refers to as “*musical montage*”.⁴¹

The novelist Italo Calvino’s way of working also resembles collage, as a way of knowing, learning and creating by combining literature, architecture and collage thinking. During a lecture delivered at Columbia University in 1993, Calvino discussed a method of knowing remarkably similar to collage while crafting his literary works.⁴² He describes his practice of accumulating fragmented images in his mind over time, ultimately transforming them into narratives. He elucidated this process by stating:

I put the pages I happen to write (following the ideas which come into my head), or mere notes for things I would like to write someday. In one file, I put

38 Donna Davis and Lynn Butler-Kisber, “Arts-Based Representation in Qualitative Research: Collage as a Contextualizing Analytic Strategy”, in *The Conference of the American Educational Research Association* (Montreal, Canada, 1999).

39 Kathleen Vaughan, “Pieced Together: Collage as an Artist’s Method for Interdisciplinary Research”, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 4, no. 1 (2005).

40 Monika Kostera, “The Narrative Collage As Research Method”, *Storytelling, Self, Society* 2, no. 2 (2006): 5–27.

41 Magda Dragu, *Form and Meaning in Avant-Garde Collage and Montage*, 2020.

42 Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988).

*the odd individuals I pump into; in another, the heroes of myth; I have a file for the trades I would like to have followed instead of being a writer had they not already been written by somebody else; in one file I collect pages on towns and landscapes of my own life, an in another imaginary city, outside of space and time. When one of these files begins to fill up, I start to think of the book that I can work it into.*⁴³

In this way, the famous novel *Invisible Cities*, composed of fragmented depictions of cities, for example, can be seen as an embodiment of Calvino's creative process.

Calvino also underscores the significance of a novel's structure. He metaphorically refers to a novel as "a vast net"⁴⁴ in which the structure represents the interconnected possibilities within the narrative. This network interlinks all fragments through points in space-time, with each individual occupying one point after another, thereby permitting the multiplication of space and time indefinitely. While Calvino acknowledges the importance of this structure, he also stresses that it need not adhere to a meticulously organised plan or a harmonious image. Instead, the structure should function as a system that guarantees the diversity of languages, thereby safeguarding a truth that transcends mere partiality.⁴⁵ In other words, Calvino does not envision the structure as a meticulously designed network map when presenting fragmented stories to the reader. Rather, he creates a multifaceted structure in which each collaged city exists in close proximity to others in the reader's mind, defying conventional notions of logical sequence and hierarchy. This network allows for multiple detours and entangled conclusions.⁴⁶ The primary objective is to unify texts that emanate as expressions of a singular voice but can be comprehended on various levels, akin to his approach in *Invisible Cities*. In many respects, constructing this system mirrors the principles of collage, presenting ideas to an audience in a cohesive yet multifaceted manner.

Collage as a research practice in architecture

Architectural research, closely intertwined with other creative practices, seeks to establish design as an inclusive and productive inquiry within the academic environment.⁴⁷ In design-based architectural research, the researcher's role extends beyond the mere realisation of physical spaces or objects. It encompasses the cultivation of pertinent inquiries throughout and beyond the design process through rigorous research methodologies. This symbiotic relationship between design and research is important. It is a dynamic interplay that enriches both domains. Sarah Wehmeyer, in her work, "Collage-Based Research and Design", conducts a comprehensive exploration of the

43 Italo Calvino, "Italo Calvino on Invisible Cities", *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art* 8 (1983): 37.

44 Italo Calvino, "Multiplicity", in *Six Memos For the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988), 124.

45 Calvino, 116–17.

46 Italo Calvino, "Exactitude", in *Six Memos For the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988), 71.

47 Raymond Lucas, *Research Methods for Architecture*, 2016.

intersection between architectural research and collage.⁴⁸ Her investigation centres on architects who prominently incorporate collage in their research and design endeavours, such as OFFICE and Dogma from Brussels, or Mexican Tatiana Bilbao. She notes that the practical skills and scientific capacities intrinsic to the medium of collage can serve as an architecture-specific tool for both design and research.⁴⁹

Wehmeyer's characterisation of practice-based architectural research is marked by its relational, reflexive, and instrumental nature, deliberately steering clear of attempts to overly regiment or rationalise the research-driven design process.⁵⁰ Instead, it illuminates the potential within the intricately structured design process as an iterative progression, where the stages of analytical, reflective, and synthetic activities interweave in a mutually dependent and recurring manner.⁵¹ Design, under this framework, is acknowledged as an ongoing, continuous process that concurrently serves as a conduit for knowledge generation. Consequently, the images, analogies, and syntheses that precede, complement, and emanate from the design process collectively construct a knowledge network for research purposes. In this light, emphasis is placed on the designer's role within the process, recognising their capacity as knowledge producers. She posits that architectural research through design must encompass deliberate, reflective phases such as alienation, revision, consolidation, and abstraction, which pivot around the architect and their actions as well as the designed object.⁵² These stages emphasise the need for design practice in research-oriented architectural design, wherein both the research context and individual concepts can be embodied.

Collage, and the practice of collaging as presented by Wehmeyer, emerge as integral components of architectural research. It is distinguished as a medium for conceptualising and investigating architecture and urban spaces while also serving as a platform for introspection and refining individual design competencies, ideals, and values. It transcends the mere representation of the present or future; instead, it constructs its distinct pictorial reality through the layered amalgamation of diverse meanings and realisations originating from the fusion of image fragments from disparate contexts. This act of recycling fragments and expressions, coupled with its inherent interpretive openness, often carries a critical intent to address societal, design, and perceptual issues. From the inception of the papier collé technique,⁵³ the dialectic of collage has undergone multifaceted interpretations within the realm of fine arts, becoming both a graphic and conceptual reference for architects.

In her work *Collage and Architecture*,⁵⁴ Jennifer A. E. Shields delves into a thorough

48 Sarah Wehmeyer, "Collage-Based Research and Design", *Dimensions* 1, no. 1 (2021).

49 Wehmeyer.

50 Ibid.

51 Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*.

52 Ibid.

53 Papier collé is a technique for collage-making that involves the pasting of various materials onto a flat surface to create compositions. It was one of the earliest forms of collage-style art and popularised by artists such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso.

54 Jennifer A E Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 2014.

examination of the use of collage within architecture. She scrutinises the artistic creations and architectural projects of prominent figures, such as Mies van der Rohe, Daniel Libeskind, Archigram, Superstudio, and Teddy Cruz. Through these examples, Shields showcases the diverse array of collage techniques employed. According to Shields, collage has evolved beyond its traditional role as a mere architectural presentation tool.⁵⁵ It has evolved into a multifaceted instrument for knowledge acquisition, learning, expression, communication, analysis, design, and fostering a more expansive global and diverse perspective on architecture. Shields even underscores the notion that architecture itself can be likened to a collage.⁵⁶

In his publication *Montage and the Metropolis*,⁵⁷ Martino Stierli forges a connection between collage and architecture. He argues that montage serves as a symbolic representation of twentieth-century modernity. Stierli explores this concept of montage, drawing links to collage, assemblage, photomontage, and bricolage. He posits that these visual schemes are ideal for depicting the fragmentary heterogeneity of the modernist production movement, replacing the monolithic spatial continuity found in Renaissance art.⁵⁸ According to his research, collage emerges as a cultural technique capable of conveying the modernity-induced traumas experienced by urban dwellers and reconciling them with the modern world.⁵⁹

Many architects and designers have harnessed collage in diverse ways and for various purposes. Architects such as Archigram, Archizoom, Superstudio, and Hans Hollein have employed collage to critique various facets of the modern city, including functionalism, capitalism, and oppressive societal structures.⁶⁰ Nils-Ole Lund adeptly employs collage, navigating the utopian and dystopian qualities inherent in this medium to examine historical and contemporary inquiries and challenges within his profession.⁶¹ Within Lund's creative sphere, collage takes on the role of an ironic, critical, yet poetic language, shedding light on the chasm that separates the original utopian ideals of the architectural profession from the realities of contemporary architecture. For Mies van der Rohe, collage served as a tool that furnished him with both graphic and epistemological resources, enabling him to revolutionise architectural representation and elaborate upon his personal conceptualisation of space. *Delirious New York* showcases some of the visionary and utopian projects realised by Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA).⁶² These projects intentionally combine collage, drawing, and theory to produce interpretations that are both critical and inquisitive.

55 Shields.

56 Ibid.

57 Martino Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2018).

58 Stierli.

59 Ibid.

60 Shields, *Collage and Architecture*.

61 Nils-Ole Lund, *Collage Architecture* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1990).

62 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York : A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, New ed. (New York: Monacelli Press, 1994).

In *Collage City*, a work by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, an alternative facet of collage within architectural research is unveiled. The authors posit collage as a metaphorical framework for perceiving the city within the broader context of urbanism and architecture. They contend that the modern city is not a homogenous, unified entity but rather a composite of various components, historical strata, and architectural styles. Rowe and Koetter advocate for embracing this diversity and complexity, promoting the idea of celebrating these urban elements rather than imposing a singular, uniform vision upon urban spaces. They exemplify this perspective through the concept of collage, which underscores the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the city.

As a result, it becomes clear that collage, as both an artistic and architectural technique, extends far beyond the confines of a single function. Architects and designers have harnessed collage as an exceptionally versatile tool. Its utility extends beyond mere communication to encompass a spectrum of other functions, including criticism, design, representation, sharing, and experimentation. The adaptability and versatility inherent in collage empower architects to convey their ideas, challenge conventional norms, and explore innovative design possibilities. Thus, it can be said that collage, as a creative practice, defies rigid theoretical boundaries, standing instead as a multidisciplinary and unrestrained medium.

This research, in its pursuit of understanding the potential of collage in contested spaces, embarks on an experimental journey within the research context. As we delve into collages within contested spaces, this experimental process promises to give us a more comprehensive and intricate understanding of collage methodology. With a more detailed exploration of collage's multifaceted functions scheduled for this thesis, notably in Part 1, where I dissect the intricate relationship between collage and contested spaces, I will delve into how architects like Lebbeus Woods have adroitly employed collage to articulate complex narratives, challenge prevailing ideologies, and shed light on the dynamic interplay between architecture and the environments it seeks to transform. Through this exploration, collage emerges not as a static representation but as a dynamic and evolving tool capable of adapting to the ever-changing landscape of architectural discourse and practice. However, before delving into the specifics of my own research, it is important to acknowledge that collage, as a research practice, has found its place in the methodologies of numerous researchers and practitioners across diverse fields.

Collage-making

In this section, I aim to elucidate the defining characteristics that underpin collage as a research medium. These characteristics approached with due consideration, lay the foundation for comprehending the intricate tapestry of collage methodology and its remarkable capacity to illuminate the multifaceted aspects of contested spaces. Through this exploration, collage emerges as a creative, interdisciplinary, and introspective methodological approach to research in architecture. It is a versatile tool for understanding architecture in all facets, be it as an object, a design, a catalyst for knowledge generation,

or a medium for effective communication.

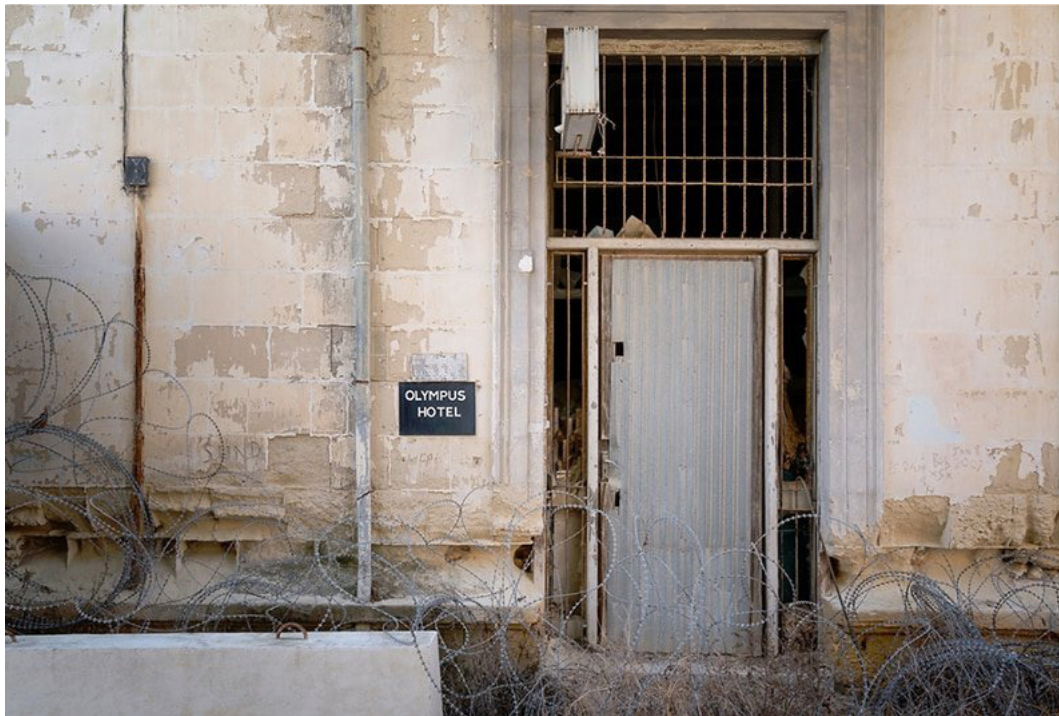
Collage-making is characterised by the absence of rigid rules or prescribed materials. It can incorporate any subject or material, making it an inherently versatile medium. While the fundamental approach may be succinctly described as 'cut and paste', each collage, despite adhering to a similar process, is unique in its purpose, composition, and combination of elements. Throughout this practice-based research, numerous collages have been generated, all undergoing nearly identical processes yet yielding distinct outcomes. These collages are examined in the ensuing chapters. This section explores the technical intricacies of collage creation by detailing the collage made in the context of this research.

The requisites for making a collage encompass basic materials and technical implements such as cutting and glueing tools. However, when creating a collage within a research framework, this necessity becomes intertwined with the research process and material research itself. This research process may either precede the act of collage-making or be steered by the collage's evolving form. In the scope of this research, five distinct series of collages have been examined, each adopting a unique approach to creation. The initial series commences with research as the first step, and the collage-making process unfolds within a predefined context. The second collage-making series follows an experimental path, wherein material and visual exploration precede the research's contextual development. It starts with visual research which then guides the literature research. The third collage series encapsulates a dual approach, seamlessly interweaving research, and experimental methods. Research and collage-making occur simultaneously. The fourth series represents collage-making as a manifestation of research. In other words, collage has become a goal, not a means, and is presented as the embodiment of knowledge. Finally, the fifth and concluding series embodies the act of making collages in-situ. Even with a planned context, the site-specific collage-making process introduces an experimental dimension.

While the collages generated for each chapter demonstrates distinct aesthetic qualities, they share a common technical process. The research potential of collage is experienced and expounded upon in the second part of this research. This current section centres on elucidating the technical construction and methodology of collage-making. Thus, this section explains a collage-making process by illustrating the specific collage created for Chapter 4, entitled 'Olympus Hotel'.

Introducing collage-making processes

Olympus Hotel is a collage that I created early in this research project. It offers an example. I am including it here to demonstrate how my collage-making research methods have proceeded, and to explain how they led to a step-by-step view of collage-making as a productive mode of research inquiry.



1 - Door of Olympus Hotel

In creating this collage, I employed the ‘thinking through making’ process, as developed by Ingold.⁶³ I adopted a minimal manipulation approach, to integrate his concepts into my research methodology further, allowing for uninhibited experimentation without preconceived notions or compositions. The intention behind this collage was to give the individual fragments agency in guiding the compositional process, unrestricted by imposed rules or predetermined concepts.

The process of making this collage unfolded through four stages. It commenced with collecting materials that caught my interest, encompassing maps, paintings, figures, textures, colours, adhesives, and more, all without a predetermined end goal. With the materials gathered, the next step entailed the initial cut, marking the commencement of the creative act. This phase focused on exploration and experimentation, with no fixed outcome. Following the initial cut, attention shifted towards the manipulation and shaping of the fragments. This stage was characterised by juxtaposing diverse elements, styles, and media, culminating in an evolving interplay of visual and tactile elements. Rather than fixating on a final image, I engaged in a process of observation, attuning myself to what the fragments were communicating to conclude the process.

To underscore the experimental contribution of collage to the broader research endeavour, I documented my process through diary writing, photographs, and video recordings. These documents serve as research data, providing a comprehensive record of the creative journey.

63 Ingold, *Making : Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*.

Step 1 – Material Collection – Listening to the fragment's own voice

I initiated my collage-making with material collection. Unlike traditional artistic endeavours, there are no set guidelines for gathering collage materials save for the fundamental tools of cutting and glueing. Any piece of paper or material can serve as a potential starting point. Thus, the selection of images for this series of collages was not bound by predetermined criteria, such as specific visual or tactile attributes. Instead, my criteria were tethered to the focal subject of the testing space – 'Nicosia' - and the dynamic interplay between the materials and myself. Employing both practical and visual experiences, I procured a wealth of visual materials from both digital and analogue sources.⁶⁴

As documented in my research diary, my approach to material collection was characterised by a sense of spontaneity:

I collected materials randomly. I did internet research first. (Covid time, and I cannot visit Nicosia; thus, I tried to find material from the internet somehow. Thanks to the Internet!) I chose “Nicosia” and “Greenline” as keywords for the online visual research. I found many images from the border. Then, I came across an image that shows the “Olympus Hotel” and the door...⁶⁵

This coincidental discovery not only provided a focal point for my collage but also demonstrated the unpredictable nature of this creative process, allowing unexpected connections to emerge.

The act of physically engaging with materials reveals their potential, particularly in visual and sensory terms.⁶⁶ My thoughts and emotions likewise influenced the collection of these materials. For instance, my architectural background sometimes directed the selection process, during which I started analysing places using cartographical data. This led to the central focus of the material collection, as also indicated in my diary:

...I am not sure how I am going to start! Let's start with a map, as I do in every architectural design project...I found different Nicosia maps online; each has a different date... There are marks on the map I printed- the main one is green. It is quite different from the normal city map. It is a map of the divided city...many maps have a green colour, but for Nicosia, the colour represents something different; it is a symbol of division.... Thanks to Google Maps again, I will have a virtual tour. ... I am walking via Google Maps- the camera's angle is not the best, and I cannot actually see the border because it is a prohibited area, and the Google Maps car cannot enter the streets; I am not sure how I am going to collect images from the border. While moving on the map, I imagined

64 The Covid-19 outbreak prevented me from having the chance to personally experience the field while I was making this collage series. For this reason, I have gathered information from a variety of conventional and digital sources, including books, travel guidebooks, and social media apps. But this situation also allowed me to discover that collage is a flexible method for conducting creative research without actually being in testing site.

65 From my research diary on 19 March 2021.

66 I also considered different sensuous aspects of a material, e.g., colours and textures, in my research. Moreover, they seem to be of major importance in this study.

creating a skin on the border. "Skin of Division..." around the border, there are many signs - most of them about the direction to the crossing point - some about restriction - some graffiti...⁶⁷

This architectural perspective not only guided my choice of materials but also imbued the collage with a structural undertone, influencing the final composition. This process also underscores the intrinsic relationship between the collagist's background - in my case, my architectural expertise - and the creative decisions made during the material selection phase.

The collage-making process is inherently adventurous and unrestricted by the materials at hand. It evolves experimentally, with any random material potentially initiating the composition or being integrated at any point in the process. In contrast to conventional scientific experiments, no predetermined list of required materials can be outlined. Despite this unpredictability of the material list, all collages begin with the same basic supplies: paper, glue, and scalpel or scissors, and they gradually develop into a metaphorical dialogue between the collagist and thoughts as I wrote the research diary:

I have different types of materials on the table. Some colours, tissue paper, tracing paper, glue, brushes... I do not know why I picked the red... questioned myself, "Is it just colour, or am I trying to dramatise the composition?"... I focused on the map again... in the map, the border zone's colour was lighter. Like somebody tried to erase it, but you cannot hide what you have on your texture or the kind of mark on the body trying to heal. It is injured but in time to recover... I put some tissue on it. I am trying to create something three-dimensional, but I am also asking myself whether I am trying to help it for healing...⁶⁸

Unexpected materials provide unexpected results, blending colours, textures, and architectural elements, which speaks to the depth of narrative that collage offers. It allows for a rich interplay of elements, evoking emotions and meaning.

Material research can be considered the collage's inception, the moment at which initial concepts begin to burgeon. It is both an informative and constructive phase, enabling the collagist-researcher to delve into various images and textures, thereby enhancing their understanding and scrutiny of the research context. Through this process, I gleaned deeper insights into the city, its history, and its very fabric, all courtesy of extensive visual research across digital and analogue sources. Furthermore, the scrutiny of maps unveiled intricate details about the city, spurring further contemplation. This endeavour also shed light on the city's constraints and the genesis of its border. As my knowledge deepened and my materials amassed, my perspective on the city gradually evolved. Commencing with a focus on division, I progressed towards examining the border, concluding with an exploration of the skin of division. Thus, this process of material collection, characterised by leaps from one image to another, not only generated the visual reservoir for the

67 From my research diary on 15 March 2021.

68 From my research diary on 18 March 2021.

collages but also facilitated the documentation of information regarding the research context.

Step 2 – Making the first cut

The material collection process shows my subjective association with and interpretation of the materials. However, it might not be enough to begin the actual collage-making process. Although knowledge and ideas are generated during the material collection, starting a collage can be challenging. In my collage diary, I often found myself writing more entries when confronted with difficulties in starting the collage-making process.⁶⁹ However, my experiences also taught me that the initial movement of the collage-making, which lacks a specific rule, should not necessarily carry significant meaning in the process or hold a prominent place in the overall collage composition. The first cut or inserted fragment is always subject to change or removal. Therefore, the act of initiation holds inherent importance, independent of the why and how.

In making a collage in the context of Nicosia, I engaged with two types of sources: primary fragments obtained through the material collection and additional or contrasting materials gathered specifically for the making process, such as colours, random journal clippings, and various paper types. As I never pre-cut and filed images, my initial process entailed extensive periods of contemplation over the images and materials at hand. Almost invariably, I am attracted to a spatial element first, allowing my connection with its form or movement to guide the juxtaposition of images. In this way, I started to conceive actual collage-making.

In the collage I am explaining here for example, later named ‘*Olympus Hotel*’, I decided to work with the image of a door that I assume is in the no-man’s zone in Nicosia. [1] Adjacent to the door, a sign indicated it was a hotel entrance. As I observed this image, a cascade of thoughts flowed through my mind, and then resolved to make the initial cut on the fragments of the door, as I noted in my diary:

...the door in the image actually represents nothing. There is nothing behind the door. Nobody will open this door, anymore at least. So, what’s behind it? Soldiers, or the Greek side or maybe the Turkish side...This realisation pushed me to think about the door’s behind, imagining ‘behind space’...⁷⁰

This phase of the collage-making process highlights the initiation challenges and the fluid nature of creative beginnings. The realisation that the first step need not dictate the final result underscores the adaptability inherent in the creative process. Additionally, the decision to refrain from pre-design images speaks to the organic evolution guided by the materials. The example of ‘*Olympus Hotel*’ illustrates how my thoughts and interpretations shape my creative decisions. The narrative surrounding the door and the questions it evokes about what

69 Almost every entry starts with or include “*I do not have any idea about collage*” or “*I am not sure how I am going to start...*”

70 From my research diary on 19 March 2021.

lies beyond it add depth to the creative process. This exemplifies how my engagement with materials is not merely a mechanical process but a thought-provoking endeavour.

Step 3 – Shaping by manipulating the fragment

Materials have the power to influence the collagist's senses, feelings, emotions, and cognition, sparking an instinctive urge to begin. Before and during working with materials, I prefer to spend some time looking at them. This helps me to understand their sense visually and tactically. Materials possess a potential for expression, their voices can be altered once they are liberated from their original context. They may convey something akin to or distinct from their initial identity. For example, seemingly mundane letters on paper can transmute into a powerful message within a collage, or a mere drop of colour can become a subject in its own right. However, this revelation often occurs during the process itself. Therefore, engaging unreservedly with the fragments can be deemed the most critical aspect of collage-making.

The actual making process, on the other hand, consists of moments that shape and improve the composition, such as the moment of decision, the moment of thought, the moment of realisation. In the collage '*Olympus Hotel*', I had a moment in which an accidental encounter helped to shape the composition. When removing the door fragment from the image, I encountered some text "...politics and sociology..." through the gap. This text belonged to a protective layer I had placed between the image I cut and the table's surface. Then it suddenly became a part of my collage-making process. While the text did not pertain directly to Nicosia, it spurred contemplation about the city and its circumstances. [2-3] After removing the protective layer, another moment arose, as documented in my diary:

I decided to see this gap on a blank page...It disturbed me. Because I know that "No-man Zone" is not that pure or something that the colour white can represent.⁷¹

As evidenced by my diary, each moment shaped my perspective through the collage-making process. [4]

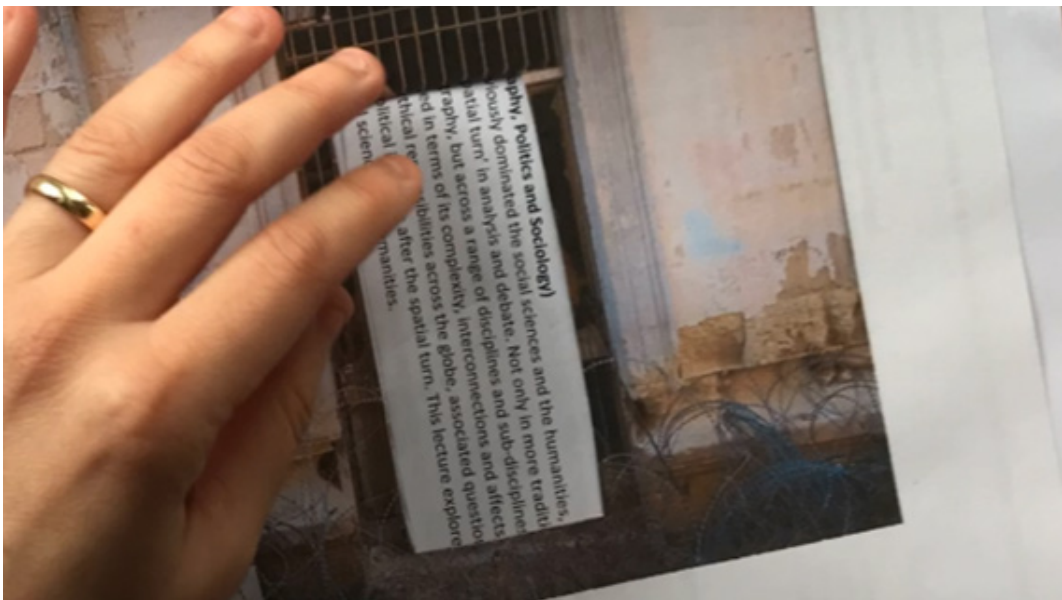
This phase encapsulates the transformative power of materials and their influence on the collagist's creative process. It underscores the dynamic relationship between the collagist and the materials, revealing their potential for unexpected revelations and reinterpretation. The moments of decision, realisation, and contemplation serve as pivotal junctures in refining the composition.

Making collages also involves some uncertain moments. It can be challenging to keep making collages continuously. During such junctures, drawing inspiration from fellow artists or artefacts proves invaluable. For example, while working on the same collage, there came a point when I sought clarity regarding my next move. I deliberated on how

71 From my research diary on 19 March 2021.



2 - A moment captured from a collage-making video



3 - Detail from the moment of 'politics and sociology.'



4 - A moment captured from a collage-making video



5 - A moment captured from a collage-making video



6 - A moment captured from a collage-making video



7 - A moment captured from a collage-making video



8 - A moment captured from a collage-making video

to make the most of the potential presented by the gap left after removing the door fragment. The collage works of the architecture firm Superstudio served as a wellspring of inspiration for my next step. Superstudio's compositions, rooted in perspective grid drawings, convey strong thematic elements. [5-7] However, the grid drawings in their work can also be perceived as a canvas for imagination. Thus, I resolved to experiment with some grid drawings. Although introducing a background layer to a gap may seem straightforward, determining the appropriate scale posed a challenge. As I worked on the background drawing, I chanced upon an image of a soldier strolling down the street on the table I was working on. I cut out this figure, gauged its size, and positioned it on the drawing in progress. [8] To view all the fragments on a unified surface, I pinned them together, enabling me to critique my work as a cohesive composition. While this collage did not set out with a political agenda, the final image evoked reflections on the political situation in Nicosia while also underscoring an awareness of the city's gaps. As a result, the process unfolded in response to the interpretation and interaction with fragments during observation, contemplation, and manipulation.

This phase also sheds light on the inherent uncertainty in creative endeavours. Seeking inspiration from other artists, as demonstrated in your engagement with Superstudio's work, exemplifies the importance of drawing from external sources to navigate creative challenges.

Each collage is a unique journey with its own distinctive experiences, shaped by the collagist's experimentation and engagement with materials. For example, in the collage-making process, which I later called '*Walls of Nicosia*', I decided to work with maps first. This endeavour commenced with a deliberate focus on maps. Extensive time was dedicated to thoroughly examining map images, revealing a nuanced heterogeneity despite their shared subject - the same city. As fragments were delicately extracted from these maps, a deeper understanding of the city's stratification emerged, prompting a profound contemplation of its intricate urban fabric. This inquiry directed attention to the city's complex layers.

Prior to the manipulation of fragments, I researched materials that allowed me to work with layers more visibly. Transparent sheets emerged as the chosen medium, affording a literal window into the layered composition. Fragments, excised from maps and images, were carefully nestled between these transparent sheets, fostering a visual dialogue and synthesis. This dynamic interplay amongst the layers engendered evolving compositions recounting diverse narratives of the city. Each rearrangement of the sheets introduced a subtle shift in the narrative. This experimental foray into collage-making was characterised by a reciprocal interplay between thought and material, propelling the exploration of alternative mediums, the pursuit of latent potential, absorption of their instructive capacity, and, ultimately, deference to their guiding influence. Consequently, while the overarching process of making each collage adheres to a familiar trajectory, each embodies a distinct narrative borne from the collagist's exploration and revelation.

Step 4 – Concluding by finding a voice

Through the process of making, I gleaned that the act of creating a collage transforms into a thought process steeped in creativity and composition. Fragments and thoughts take place when creating the composition but, after all, layers try to form my experience of thinking, living, and communicating as a space. Yet, it also impressed upon me that this process lacks a definitive conclusion. Consequently, bringing closure to the process can prove to be the most arduous task for a collagist. Based on my findings, the addition and subtraction of fragments from the collaged image remain perpetually viable. Take, for instance, the case of *'Olympus Hotel'*. After allowing the composition to rest for four months without any alterations, I modified the background and a tape texture employed to conceal sniper weaponry. [9 - 10] However, I find it challenging to assert that it is definitively complete. Consequently, I persist in my experimental process, abstaining from permanently affixing fragments to the substrate. Instead, I employ pins to affix them, affording me the flexibility required to bring the composition to its culmination. Thus, it may be asserted that while a specific juncture exists to initiate the creation of a collage, a defined moment of conclusion may not necessarily be forthcoming.

This stage encapsulates the fluidity of the creative process, emphasising the collagist's ongoing dialogue with the work. The recognition that the collage-making process lacks a fixed terminus underscores the dynamic nature of creative expression. By eschewing a rigidly defined endpoint, the collagist maintains a space for continual evolution and refinement.

In conclusion, this example shows how the exploration of collage-making is a dynamic and iterative process in which the collagist engages in a profound dialogue with materials, space, and concepts. From material collection to final composition, each phase contributes to a comprehensive understanding of not only the creative creation but also the researched context. The process echoes an endless and unpredictable potential for exploration and evolution, defying fixed endpoints and inviting continual refinement. Building upon the experiential foundation laid in the collage-making process, the following section presents collage as methodology, defining its principles and applications within



9 - *Olympus Hotel*, collage designed by author, 2022



10 - *Revisited 'Olympus Hotel,'* collage re-designed by author, 2023

the realm of architectural research. This innovative approach, rooted in the transformative power of collage, promises to enrich and expand the horizons of architectural research and creative practice by providing a new perspective on contested spaces and their potential for engagement.

Proposing collage methodology

Out of my literature review work, and my own collage-making practices, I have identified a collage-making methodology. It is as follows:

- Collage is a creative practice:

Collage methodology revolves around creative practice as an experimental inclination. Unlike systematic research-driven design, which seeks to formalise the design process, collage emphasises creativity and experimentation, striving to yield fresh insights and viewpoints through open-ness. Collage highlights the potential of a multifaceted design research process that iteratively intertwines analytical, reflective, and synthetic phases.

- It is correlative.

Collage is about encounters and juxtapositions. It involves uniting disparate elements such as images, visuals, texts, and found objects through trials, errors, and repetitions. The resulting discontinuity in texture is not an anomaly; rather, it signifies collage's potential. This juxtaposition of fragments fosters the emergence of connections and resonances among ideas, cultivating a dynamic and associative approach to research. This relationship is not predetermined but thrives on experimentation, promoting discussion, learning, and a non-linear approach to exploration.

- It suggests inclusivity and interdisciplinarity.

Collage, in its very act of juxtaposition, invites the coexistence of diverse disciplinary discourses. Its lack of strict rules or conditions facilitates the convergence of various fields, positioning practitioners at the intersection of these disciplines. Collage values multiple perspectives, welcoming non-dominant forms of knowledge and allowing these distinctions to coexist harmoniously. It blurs dichotomies and boundaries, encouraging the synthesis of diverse viewpoints and contributing to a holistic understanding of complex phenomena. Rather than seeking unified knowledge, collage embraces a heterogeneous field of coexisting and competing images and ideas, fostering dialectical tension and cultural transformation.

- It creates a connection with the individual.

Collage methodology engages with individual experiences and personal creations. The collagist serves as both the initiator and decision-maker in collage creation, while the viewer assumes the role of interpreter. The interpretation and meaning of the collage depend on the viewer's background and experiences, bridging the individual's experiences with theoretical underpinnings and enabling critical engagement with the broader context.

- It positions the creative practitioner as a researcher.

Central to collage methodology is the concept of the situated collagist-researcher. The creative process unfolds to the collagist's actions, leading to a deeper articulation and theorisation of the self. The researcher becomes the research subject, emphasising personal meanings, history, culture, and tradition, allowing diverse voices to converge into a shared space.

- It is interrogative.

Collage, as an investigative method, aims to pose and explore specific questions throughout the design process. It does not seek "solutions" to research problems but rather raises "questions" about the emergence of these problems and the learning required to address them. Collage can 'shock and surprise,' challenging conventional thinking by juxtaposing seemingly unrelated fragments, leading to novel perspectives and insights. It fosters critical self-reflection and invites viewers to question their own perspectives and actions in relation to their environment and others.

- It is experimental.

The act of creating a collage is inherently experimental. It lacks rules or a predetermined order, with the selection and organisation of fragments occurring spontaneously. This process aligns with psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas' concept of the "unthought known," where unconscious influences play a role in fragment selection.⁷² Collage not only challenges the collagist's choices but also prompts viewers to perceive familiar elements in new ways, fostering deep, relational, and reflexive thinking.

- It does not offer a fixed conclusion.

Collage methodology embraces open-endedness, representing a practice at a specific moment, shaped by the juxtaposition of individual ideas and creative endeavours. Collage-making allows fragments to be added or removed at any point, rendering it an ongoing process with no ultimate conclusion.

- It is multidimensional.

Collage transcends dimensions, manifesting in two or three dimensions on a plane while also symbolising mental processes. Reflecting intuitive and somatic brain functions, collage offers an associative approach to thinking, enabling lateral, visual, material, tactile, and spatial exploration. It serves as a means to gather and perceive ideas within the research context.

- It is free and pluralistic.

Collage celebrates the art of overcoming boundaries and embracing differences. Its multiplicity necessitates a pluralistic approach, introducing new models of representation

⁷² Christopher Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, 2017, 277–83.

and interpretation when traditional methods fall short. Collage fosters a free, holistic working environment devoid of constraints, where brave exploration thrives amidst the conditions of the research context.

- *It consists of reflexive components.*

Creating a collage involves various reflective steps, such as selecting, cutting, placing, linking, and glueing. These moments of contemplation allow personal thoughts to merge, connecting with randomisation and resulting in fresh creative input. Collage-making serves as a reflexive tool, aiding researchers in documenting and archiving their designs and related knowledge, promoting examination, comparison, and rethinking of ideas and syntheses.

As a result, collage methodology, as I characterise it here, is a multifaceted research practice offering a dynamic and inclusive approach to understanding complex phenomena, claiming to promote experimentation, critical thinking, and the production of knowledge through open-ended exploration.

Research approaches and documentation

My collage-making process, comprising the four interconnected steps listed above, has been key to my efforts to understand the research aim and questions. Each phase of collage-making concludes with a series of inquiries, which serve as the starting point for subsequent inquiries. In this iterative cycle, each collage-making step is both a continuation of the previous one, and the catalyst for the next.

Research approaches

In my research, I employed an approach that involves an interplay between creative practice and theoretical discussion. This approach consisted of three primary forms and activities: 1) *Collage-making*; 2) *Reflection* on my creative experiences, analysing my creative process, questioning my decisions and thoughts, and interpreting the collages I generated within the research context; and 3) *Reading literature*. I employed these three concurrent actions during the research process, allowing them to influence and interact with each other. This interaction, supported by the documentation of my experiences throughout the process, ultimately shaped this practice-based study.

As already mentioned, as a part of this research process, I organised an exhibition. However, the intention of presenting work in an exhibition was not to serve as a placeholder, an illustrative example, or an aspect awaiting realisation in an exhibition yet to come but rather to suggest something critical to the basic methodological principles guiding this design-based research inquiry.⁷³ Presenting any image as somehow final within this research risks misrepresenting this inquiry. The preparatory work for the exhibition, comprising compiled collages and fragments, constructed moments, and the diverse

⁷³ The purpose of this exhibition was not merely to showcase the collages as finished images and elicit viewer experiences. Instead, it served as a testing ground for collages still in progress, aiming to explore the practice's dialogical potential.

interpretations derived from the collages, all had the same status: they were exploratory. The documentation of the final exhibition then became a part of this research, but not at the expense of the exploratory work. It represented a further experimental exploration of an alternative collage-making technique with the space and the research context.

Collage is not yet research without relation to literature and without interpretation. Collage can be used to test various thoughts in practice. It sheds light on how a collagist-researcher develops their creative practice, their actions within the creative process, the underlying motivations, and the outcomes, which can be illuminated through relevant literature. By making specific collages centred around research questions, the collagist-researcher can determine the most effective path for guiding the research process. The questions related to collage-making with respect to Nicosia, particularly regarding the potential of collage as a medium for engaging with contested spaces, were shaped through my collage practice and my reflection upon it. I addressed this issue by creating distinct collage series. Four specific collage series, and one testing collage space, were designed, and produced in alignment with the five research questions. Thus, engaging in problem-oriented thinking while making collages, not only guides the production process, but also enhances comprehension of the process in relation to the research questions.

A concern in collage-based research

One key concern in collage-based research can be the copyright and ethical use of images. This area remains an evolving topic among collage practitioners and researchers. Collages typically incorporate fragments sourced from various media such as magazines, newspapers, websites, and other outlets. Tracking the origins of these fragments can be challenging due to the experimental nature of collage. Elements may be layered or later altered, influencing the collage process in ways that make source referencing both impractical and potentially awkward for presentation. According to *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, the legality and ethics of using image fragments in collages are somewhat ambiguous.⁷⁴ The usage of fragments of an image in a collage, particularly in a research context, has not faced legal challenges to date. For researchers who use collages as tools for data generation and interpretation, and where the work remains private, copyright issues are less pertinent. However, for those displaying their collages in public forums, such as academic journals, questions about the appropriation of others' work persist.⁷⁵ As also noted in the book, when fragments are removed from their original context and integrated into new ones, the connection to the source material weakens or breaks entirely.⁷⁶ Thus, while the debate over the copyright or ethical implications of using image fragments in collages is ongoing, it does not pose a significant concern for this research, as the origins of the used materials in collage-making have not been legally contested.

74 Given, *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 96.

75 Given, *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*.

76 Ibid.

Documentation

Documentation plays a pivotal role in the execution of this practice-based research. In any practice-based research, the dynamic interplay between various elements - materials, techniques, and the practitioner - forms the creative process.⁷⁷ Documentation of the making process emerges as a component that distinguishes creative research production from the traditional paradigm of design practices, which typically prioritise the final product over the process itself. Moreover, documenting the process and transitional stages of collages contributes to transparency and enhances the communicability of the creative process.

Throughout this research, I employed various tools to document my progress, using different approaches at each stage. This documentation provided data for analysis, the results of which enabled me to generate arguments to form a written thesis at the end of the research, following Schön's concept of '*reflective practice*'.⁷⁸ According to Schön, a practitioner seeks to comprehend the context they are operating within, understanding what actions they are undertaking and the reasoning behind them. Schön explains reflective learning into three components: '*knowing in action*', '*reflecting in action*', and '*reflecting on action*'. *Knowing in action* refers to the ability of an experienced practitioner to act instinctively in a structured scenario. It embodies a practical knowledge that an adept practitioner employs in their actions, even though it may be challenging to articulate verbally. *Reflection in action* pertains to a scenario where the practitioner encounters an unfamiliar situation and is compelled to deviate from their habitual course of action or original plan. *Reflection on action* involves an analytical process wherein the practitioner contemplates their thoughts, actions, and emotions in relation to a specific event in their professional practice. This reflection elucidates the lessons from prior actions, informing how they might reconfigure their approach when confronted with a similar situation. Stephen Scrivener extended Schön's definitions, advocating for systematic documentation to capture both creative output and reflections in action.⁷⁹ This documentation, therefore, grants accessibility to the research project in which the creative productions are situated, as I follow for this research.

The content of my documentation is twofold: the creative practice of making; and reflecting on making processes and collages, including the shaping of the exhibition space and reflections on discussions with participants. To capture these facets comprehensively, a variety of methods were employed to document and record the research process:

Video Recording was used to film my actions in the creative process. The collage-making process represents a journey full of decisions and moments. The purpose of video recording was to capture these pivotal moments throughout the collage-making

77 Nithikul Nimkulrat, "The Role of Documentation in Practice-Led Research", *Journal of Research Practice* 3, no. 1 (2007).

78 Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner : How Professionals Think in Action*.

79 Stephen A.R. Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design", *International Journal of Design Sciences and Technology* 10, no. 2 (n.d.): 25–44.

process, such as how the collage gradually took shape throughout the composition-making process and how it differed from how the practitioner saw collages while creating them. It documented the evolution of each collage, from the initial material selection to the moment of its completion.⁸⁰

Photographing was used in addition to the recording process in two different ways. Firstly, it was employed during collage creation to capture specific moments of significance. Secondly, it was applied in the exhibition/testing space, where it was used to document the positions and movements of collage fragments in space and observe the relationship between them.

Diary writing was used to record collage-making intentions and experiences during the creative process, from conceptualising to manipulating fragments. It recorded not only the concrete elements, such as the choices of images and the reason for choosing them, but also the less tangible things, my feelings and the situation during the observation and arrangement of materials. Each experiment was marked with a date and a title. It provided a ground for realising details that cannot be recognised during the making process. Therefore, revisiting the diary writing allowed me to see cumulative thoughts, intentions, and decisions from a reflective perspective.

I also turned to my diary when reading and recording literature, particularly in the creation process of the second and third collage series, where the research precedes collage-making. It involved taking notes, quoting from and paraphrasing the text that was read, and writing down my own responses. As a part of collage-making, literature research can help to form the idea of the collage composition. It facilitated interaction between the readings and collage-making within the research process.

Around the exhibition, my *Discussion Diary* served as a tool to document the process of creating a collage space for testing and the ideas obtained through conversations with participants who voluntarily engaged in communication and collaboration with me in the exhibition space. A structured questionnaire was not employed as the objective was to explore the potential of the collages to foster dialogue with the visitors, and use the ideas gathered from such interactions to enhance the creative process. Thus, the diary writing captured my reflections that emerged from the interactions with the participants. Moreover, the exhibition space was a space constructed by collaging different elements together. Therefore, the diary also sought to document the participants' relationship with the collages, their interaction, and their movement within the collaged space. In addition to documenting daily reflections during the exhibition, the diary served as a repository for questions and self-criticism that emerged during conversations with participants.

80 Although it might be challenging to declare a collaged image "finished", it is important to keep in mind that collage is a research medium for this study and requires an ending moment.

Structure of this thesis

The following thesis comprises two parts in addition to this introductory section. The first part establishes the theoretical framework for my research question and my practice. The second part introduces that research practice through collage-making centred on Nicosia.

This creative practice research is underpinned by a dynamic and iterative process where theory and collage-making inform and shape each other. The process is not linear but rather symbiotic. Theory can inform collage-making, or the insights gained from the creative process can guide further research inquiries. This symbiotic relationship between research and practice ensures a gradual yet organic development of both the creative work and the research insights. Therefore, this research is not just an exploration of theoretical concepts. It is a tangible embodiment of the journey through collage-making. It represents an evolving dialogue between academic inquiry and creative expression, encapsulating the potential of collage-making as a medium for engaging with and interpreting spatial narratives in contested spaces.

Part I – *Theorising the research and practice*

This part provides a theoretical framework for exploring my creative practice within contested spaces. It does not recount my personal experiences - neither with collage nor with creative expression within my own practice. It consists of two chapters. The first chapter extends discussion around key concepts of the research, namely collage, contested space, and agency, while also exploring their interrelationships. The second section conducts an in-depth analysis of these concepts through a case study, specifically examining the siege of Sarajevo during the Bosnia and Herzegovina War, as explored in drawing, montage, and collage by Lebbeus Woods.

Chapter 1 - *Collage, Contested Space, and Agency* offers definitions of collage and contested space, and introduces the concept of agency to establish their interconnectedness.

Collage, as a creative practice characterised by the juxtaposition of fragments, has transcended its traditional association with artistic production. It has been embraced by practitioners across various disciplines, evolving into a versatile practice. This chapter traces the historical evolution of collage, presenting its own definition by examining its diverse applications and purposes.

Contested Spaces, marked by their fragmented nature, represent environments where cultures converge, collide, and grapple with one another, often within contexts of pronounced power imbalances. While each contested space is unique, they share commonalities in limitations and boundaries. This chapter furnishes a broad definition of contested spaces, delving into the dynamics of peace-making endeavours within these environments and elucidating the requisite attitudes for working in such contexts.

Agency emerges as a key concept in comprehending the application of collage within contested spaces. Within a collage, individual fragments undergo a metamorphosis. They shift focus from their definitive interpretation or specific qualities within a given context to their juxtaposition, inviting viewers to engage with the interstices of meaning actively. This dynamic is influenced by several dimensions: the fragment's relationship with its original context, interaction with other fragments in the composition, and the viewer's interpretation. This section introduces two facets of collage agency: the agency of fragments and the agency of the individual.

Chapter 2 - *The Case of Sarajevo* serves as a comprehensive case study of the potential for creative practice within contested spaces, using Lebbeus Woods' creative investigation of the siege of Sarajevo as a focal point. This analysis aims to provide a broader perspective before applying my own creative practice in direct relation to the research question and practice for engagement.

The Case of Sarajevo is significant in scrutinising using creative practices within contested spaces. During the city's siege, artists and architects actively participated in the conflict. They adapted their practices to the exigencies of war, simultaneously documenting the city's devastation and re-establishing communication that had been entirely severed. In this context, this chapter first examines 'Warchitecture' and 'Sarajevo: Survival Guide,' two works that emerged during the siege, and then conducts a detailed analysis of Lebbeus Woods' project for Sarajevo.

Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project provides insights into the understanding of architecture as a creative practice tool in contested spaces. Woods' work proposes an alternative approach to reconstructing a war-damaged city, employing techniques such as montage, collage, and assemblage. This chapter, therefore, offers an in-depth exploration of Woods' project, addressing both its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications.

Part II – *Collaging Nicosia: Insights from collage-making*

This part centres on my own research practice and introduces collage as a methodical approach for engaging with contested space research, drawing from my experiences in creating collages in Nicosia.

It outlines five distinct stages of collage-making. The first stage uses the descriptive potential of collage to survey Cyprus' contested past, highlighting historical narratives and conflicts. The second shifts focus to the imaginative potential of collage, interpreting the physical and social textures of the divided city. The third explores the interpretative potential of collage, analysing and visually representing the dynamics of peace-making operations in Nicosia. The fourth, featuring my personal collage project in the Buffer Zone, devolves into spatial exploration, introducing architectural and spatial collage

narratives in contested space. And the final stage presents the exhibition, showcasing the dialogical potential of collage, fostering participants' engagement and providing alternative understanding and interpretation.

The collage-making process significantly influenced the structure of this section. Each stage explains my progression through this sequential process. Its inherently reflective nature invariably sparks further inquiry, thus initiating subsequent collage-making endeavours. While the techniques employed in collage-making remain consistent in terms of series creation, each series follows slightly different methodologies, contributing to the evolution of the practice.

Chapter 3 – *Engaging with a Contested Past* focuses on the history of Cyprus, recalling the conflict in Nicosia through collage-making.

The history of Cyprus is marked by a series of transformative events: the enduring impact of colonisation and anti-colonial movements, instability in the post-colonial era, the divisive effects of ethnic nationalisms, and internal conflicts within and between ethnic groups. These events have led to disputes, invasions, territorial divisions, and the displacement of populations. Together, these threads weave into the intricate 'Cyprus Problem' – an, as yet, unresolved predicament that embodies various critical moments and concepts integral to the island's historical layers. In this chapter, through collage-making, I explore these historical intricacies from multiple perspectives - Greek Cypriots, Greeks, Turks, Turkish Cypriots, and the British - each offering their unique interpretation of events. The collage-making process becomes a tool for examining these pivotal junctures, with research and artistic exploration focusing on these distinct narratives.

The collage-based research begins with an overview of Cyprus's history, starting from the Ottoman Empire and transitioning through British administration. This is followed by an examination of the 1960 Treaties and the island's journey to independence. The narrative then progresses to explore post-1963 events: the Enosis movement's aspiration to unite Cyprus with Greece, the 1974 intervention, the resulting permanent division of the island, the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and the island's European Union accession process. The chapter also highlights how Nicosia's heterogeneous cultural, political, social, and spatial composition has evolved and transformed amidst the conflict.

In this chapter, the collages serve as a means to interrogate these crucial junctures from a collagist's standpoint, with research and material exploration centring around these distinct readings. The collage-making process underscores that collage is a political, provocative, manipulative, and sometimes even deceptive medium. It composes images from fragments of contested space, yet concurrently, it serves as a descriptive medium

that allows multiple viewpoints to coexist in societies where histories are interpreted through many perspectives. This chapter underscores that collage can serve as a tool for historians for multivocal historical research, facilitating the juxtaposition and cooperation of diverse narratives.

Chapter 4 - *The Impact of Conflict on Nicosia* is dedicated to comprehending the profound impact of the conflict on the city by tracing its marks.

Over the course of its history, the city of Nicosia has been stratified and divided into two parts as a consequence of conflicts. This division compelled Turkish Cypriots in the south to migrate northward and Greek Cypriots in the north to move southward. The Buffer Zone emerged under the auspices of the United Nations. The collages in this section follow these traces of these incidents within the city, presenting diverse narratives that encapsulate the evolving identity and texture of Nicosia.

This chapter explores Nicosia through five collaged stories, each representing different narratives associated with the city and created using diverse collage-making techniques. These collaged narratives progress from a macro scale of maps to a micro-scale of points, providing insight into the fabric of the city. Through these narratives, the collaged images introduce Nicosia, supported by the literature. The first story depicts the city's layered history by tracing its outlines from maps originating from different periods. The second collage experiment also follows the marks on the map, leading to the narrative about the visible and invisible borders of the walled city, revealing that they have shaped over time. The third collage provides a close examination of the border images, highlighting how they reflect the language of the city shaped by its contested environment. The fourth collage brings attention to the border itself by emphasising the walls that define it. Through questioning the meaning of the forbidden zone, this collage explores the potential of the no man's land for the city. The final collage wonders beyond the border, questioning its existence and exploring the creative potentials of the region despite political constraints.

Through these collaged narratives, the city's texture metamorphoses into visual stories, providing an alternative means of perceiving and understanding through collage. Furthermore, making collages by tracing the city's textures prompts imagination about the latent potential within these traces. It harmonises voices amid the fragments of the contentious areas of the city, stimulating collective introspection. These initiatives spark initial inquiries about the future trajectory of the city. It introduces that collage can be a productive method for urban researchers, particularly its role in imagining and interpreting a city as complex and layered as Nicosia.

Chapter 5 – *Peace-Making Operations* delves into the comprehension of peacekeeping operations in Nicosia.

The peace-making process for Nicosia began with a collaborative effort to address a sewerage problem and became a catalyst for peace-making based on the common imperative of living together on the same island. This attempt to work together then evolved into an attempt to create a place and, ultimately, a legacy. Through collage-making, this chapter attempts to explore and analyse these initiatives in an attempt to understand the future envisaged for Nicosia.

This chapter's practice focuses on the peace-making process of Nicosia, shedding light on the condition of the city and the progress made so far. It scrutinises the sewerage system project, the Nicosia Master Plan, and the New Vision within this framework. Examination of the peace-making process and the readings of these projects from a collagist perspective provide an understanding of the needs of and envision the desired future for the city, and question the act of imagining the future through fragments.

The process of collage-making introduces an alternative mode of thinking as well as analytical thinking within peace-making processes. While the city is replete with boundaries and constraints, collage dismisses the limitations imposed by these physical and ideological divides. Instead, it acknowledges their existence. Contrary to the previously proposed non-political environment for the city, it proposes a political milieu. Yet, the conflicts that arise from this environment do not impede collage production. Consequently, it provides an alternative approach to operating within a contested city, emphasising the analytical and interpretative potential of collage and offering an alternative perspective for urbanists.

Chapter 6 – *Buffer Zone Furniture Store* offers my collage interpretation of Nicosia, amalgamating the knowledge acquired throughout this process.

This chapter does not present a conventional architectural project but a proposal where architecture transcends into a visual language to understand and reimagine urban spaces through collage-making. Collage is used as an alternative way of thinking and making in contested space.

In this chapter, my focus is on the Buffer Zone, which has come to symbolise the division in the city while also serving as an alternative space where two communities can coexist. After elucidating these facets, the chapter delves into the concept of alternative space and how collage can engender such a space. I present a collage work that illustrates the potential existence of an alternative space in Nicosia. This collage work synthesises previous processes while integrating new methods to transcend the constraints of

the Buffer Zone. This process underscores the potential that collage-making can offer within the Buffer Zone and, within the context of this chapter, is conceptualised as a 'furniture store' of the divided city.

It is acknowledged that this interpretation is rooted in my personal preconceptions, imagination, and thoughts during the collage process. However, the collage has embraced this interpretation, alongside other alternative viewpoints, as the inaugural perspective of this thesis. Consequently, this chapter culminates with my collage interpretation, representing just one among numerous perspectives, offering an alternative lens through which to perceive the divided city of Nicosia. It underscores collage can be a platform for designers to engage with challenging spaces, offering an opportunity to articulate speculative ideas about the city.

Chapter 7 - *Exhibition Space* presents an experiment where the collages from previous chapters converge with the participants in space.

Collage inherently produces an image. Although viewers might not experience its making process, its fragmentary nature is often characterised by a sense of 'unfinishedness.' Related to the sequences of collages produced in previous chapters, this fragmentary nature is important to the dialogical potential of collage. Collages can engage the individual's agency through their fragments, fostering an evolving dialogue based on the interaction between these fragments and participants. While the collages presented may appear as final images to participants, their fragmentary nature provides an alternative space that encourages challenging and unexpected interpretations and dialogues. This chapter delves into the mechanisms shaping these dialogues, further exploring collage's potential to facilitate multifaceted conversations.

This chapter serves two primary purposes. Firstly, it seeks to interrogate the issue of research through the dialogue that emerges between the participants, and the collages focused on Nicosia as well as with myself, the collagist. Secondly, it examines collage-making in situ, a practice I call site-specific collage-making.

Through the act of re-contextualizing fragments in a physical space, it shows that collage serves as a medium of dialogue and can function as a means of communication. This interaction sparks dialogues and reinterpretations, lending new meanings to the collages. Collage's expressive nature facilitates the communication of thoughts, emotions, and ideas, offering viewers a rich visual vocabulary for articulating their narratives. The interactions demonstrate that collage serves as a direct, personal communication medium, with fragments resonating emotionally and intellectually with individuals. These engagements underscore the expressive and dialogical

potential of collage, as participants brings new meanings and insights to the collages, contributing to a collective discourse. Additionally, engaging in collage-making within the context of research within a specific locale has demonstrated that collage can shape a given area. The chapter highlights collage's potential as a dynamic and interactive medium, particularly as an effective tool for enablers for facilitating dialogue and understanding in urban environments marked by contention and complexity.

Through this practice-based research, it becomes evident that an architectural approach embodying qualities such as deceptiveness, imagination, interpretation, spatial awareness, and dialogic engagement can yield a language of collage in the design of projects within contested spaces. However, this research does not represent a singular methodology. Given its inherently fragmented, remaking, and re-perceptual nature, creative practice study embodies various characteristics of collage. It is provocative, political, interrogative, creative, and thought-provoking. Furthermore, it exhibits qualities of being deceptive, evocative, dialogic, and employs rhetorical strategies. These attributes collectively formulate a reflective framework that is pertinent not only for researchers but also for practitioners in various fields.

PART I

Theorising research and practice

Part I provides the theoretical underpinning necessary for the exploration of collage within contested spaces. To achieve this objective, the part is divided into two chapters: the first surveys collage practices, contested spaces, and agency; the second examines the siege of Sarajevo and artistic practices from the war, and then focuses on Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project, serving as a case study that navigates some fundamental concepts. This examination contributes to the conceptual framework and lays the groundwork for shaping my approach to creative practice research.

Research through practice can be dissected into two components: the theoretical framework that informs the research question and the researcher's practice, and the creative expression that materialises during the act of creation. The former plays an external role, while the latter resides internally. From my experience as a researcher-collagist, in the exploration of creative practice intertwined with the act of creation, these components demonstrate an interconnection despite their distinct functions. Within the context of collage, where the act of creation itself constitutes a process, this procedure becomes entwined with the theoretical aspects of the practice and the subject of investigation.

As images are manipulated, a reciprocal relationship takes shape. The materials engage in dialogue, revealing their heterogeneity and potential inquiries. This interactive dynamic not only influences the making process in this research rooted in creative practice but also generates inquiries that encompass both the research subject and the practice itself. As the problem of my research is seeking the relationship between creative practice, collage in particular, and contested spaces, it seems necessary to look at each component. Understanding an individualistic comprehension of these components may create awareness of their possible incorporation into my collage productions.

This part examines how collage in contested spaces can provide a conceptual framework. Its multidisciplinary nature is anchored in its material attributes and adaptability to diverse processes and challenges across different eras. In contested spaces, intricate relationships and concepts struggle to coexist, rendering relationships intolerable, in other words, the inability of differences to coexist. While collage embodies limitlessness in practice, contested spaces are characterised by constraint. However, the study of agency offers insights into the potential coexistence of collage and contested spaces. Artistic practices from the siege of Sarajevo provide instructive case study, while Woods' project provides an architectural and collagist perspective.

Chapter I

Collage, Contested Space, and Agency

Collage

As previously introduced, collage is a multidisciplinary creative practice that includes creating, thinking, building, and understanding the world. It defies conventional aesthetic boundaries by juxtaposing, remixing, adding, and subtracting materials from different sources, resulting in unexpected dualities that transcend established rules. Etymologically, the term 'collage' originates from the French word 'collé' (glue), signifying its historical connection to the tradition of handicraft.¹ Dictionary definitions of collage also refer to this etymological root and offer simple descriptions of the technique. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, collage is defined as "an abstract form of art in which photographs, pieces of paper, newspaper cuttings, string, etc., are placed in juxtapositions and glued to the pictorial surface".² Similarly, the *Cambridge Dictionary* classifies collage as "a picture in which various materials of the object, for example, paper, cloth, or photographs, are stuck onto a larger surface".³ Nonetheless, these definitions offer a primitive understanding of the collage technique, describing it only as an act of making. However, beyond its assembly, collage encapsulates an array of potentialities intrinsically linked to this creative endeavour, encompassing faculties of knowing, learning, understanding, analysing, and interpreting.

Collage has been adopted by multidisciplinary practitioners, allowing fragments from different origins to come together, challenging possible impositions, which has led to the evolution of the practice. It has undergone metaphorical and technical metamorphoses, adapting to the evolving thoughts and methods of each era. It has evolved beyond its traditional definition of mere cut-and-paste techniques, transforming into a cultural medium. It emerges as a transformative method of understanding, and engaging with the world, fostering interdisciplinary connections, and embracing the multifaceted nature of contemporary life. Consequently, this paradigm shift has engendered many divergent definitions and interpretations that mirror collage's evolution and its capacity to acclimate and resonate within diverse creative, academic, and cultural contexts. In the context of this research, it is therefore important to trace the metamorphosis of collage from its earliest stages to its contemporary manifestations in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of its potential as a research medium for this design-based research. Thus, in this section, I explain how the artistic principles and techniques of collage have evolved and diversified to become an innovative form of expression and research technique and redefine collage, which in the context of this research, allows me to shed light on the rich tapestry of meanings and possibilities that collage offers in the field of creative research in contested areas.

1 Martino Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2018), 18.

2 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "collage, n.", July 2021.

3 *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "collage, n.", July 2021.

Collage-related terms

With the conceptual changes and development in collage, a set of terms has emerged to encapsulate novel conceptualisations, including montage, photomontage, assemblage, capriccio, and bricolage. These terms are not entirely independent or identical, but generally, they can be seen as interrelated and sometimes used interchangeably. Distinguishing between them can be challenging, as they exist within a grey area. While they share similarities, each term contains fragments within its subject matter, making clear definitions elusive. However, understanding these terms is important in order to recognise the conceptual evolution of collage over time. In this section, these related terms will be briefly explained for clarity and coherence.

Assemblage

The artistic technique known as 'assemblage' was initially introduced by the French artist Jean Dubuffet in 1953.⁴ Dubuffet employed the term to characterise three-dimensional artworks created by combining diverse elements.⁵ It can also be described as a technique that brings together multiple materials on the level of stylistic relationships. This feature aligns it with collage, which also shares similarities in terms of three-dimensional composition. However, in the English language, the terms 'montage' and 'assemblage' are often used interchangeably, particularly in the context of industrial production. Montage, on the other hand, encompasses additional associations, such as photomontage and cinematic montage in fictional contexts. In contrast to assemblage, it primarily relates to pictorial representation and lacks the three-dimensional aspect found in the latter.

Montage

'Montage' involves the juxtaposition of photographic elements, transforming them into the primary compositional principle across various artistic media.⁶ This term also denotes a visual technique revolutionising the perception of evolving urban phenomena during industrialisation. Sergei Eisenstein, in the context of film constructions, described the perspective of space as images coming together to create specific meanings and evoke emotional responses.⁷ Similarly, Siegfried Giedion, in 1941, adopted a comparable approach to Sergei Eisenstein's photomontage, crafting a composition of the Rockefeller Centre by merging photographs taken from different angles. He aimed to reproduce and explain the pedestrian's experience of discontinuous, fragmented, temporally extended perception of gigantic structures disproportionate to space.⁸ Although both collage and montage are intertwined with images and converge in the realm of spatial experience, montage establishes a relationship centred on moving images rather than fixed ones.

4 Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 17.

5 Anna Dezeuze, "Assemblage, Bricolage, and the Practice of Everyday Life", *Art Journal (New York. 1960)* 67, no. 1 (2008): 31–37.

6 Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 1.

7 Sergei M Eisenstein, "Montage and Architecture", *Assemblage*, no. 10 (1989): 111–31.

8 Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture : The Growth of a New Tradition*, 5th ed., r, Charles Eliot Norton Lectures; 1938-1939 (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Photomontage

Distinguishing between 'photomontage' and collage can be challenging. Both techniques involve combining fragments to create compositions. The primary divergence lies in the conceptual evolution of these methods. Collage exhibits a lack of restrictions on materials and construction techniques, allowing any object to become an integral element. Photomontage, on the other hand, predominantly relies on pictorial images. However, the challenge arises from the existence of collages solely composed of images, making it challenging to draw a clear distinction between these terms. In his book *Montage and the Metropolis*, Martino Stierli, argues the difference between these two, characterising collage as a concept divorced from industrial production and rejecting romantic notions of artistic invention.⁹ Nevertheless, this emphasis overlooks the evolving nature of collage over time, as many writers and artists perceive collage and photomontage as interconnected and mutually influential. Especially with the development of technology and digital tools, the distinction between these two mediums has become even more blurred. The clear transitions between fragments in digital media-produced collages or photomontages have nearly vanished, intensifying the blurred boundary between these two mediums.

Bricolage

'Bricolage', as discussed by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in his work *The Savage Mind*, embodies a mode of thought intrinsic to mythological thinking.¹⁰ In this paradigm, bricoleur adeptly engages in diverse tasks using a limited, heterogeneous set of tools and materials.¹¹ Repurposing available elements, bricolage addresses novel challenges, transcending the confines of specific projects. This concept draws a parallel with the creative practice of collage, where collagists, akin to bricoleurs, create artefacts through improvisation using pre-existing materials.¹² However, a crucial divergence emerges as the collagist consciously selects and arranges materials from different sources within a self-conscious aesthetic framework for meaning production. In contrast, for the bricoleur, as Lévi-Strauss notes, the universe of the instrument is closed, and the rules of the game dictate making do with "whatever is at hand".¹³ Thus, while both bricolage and collage share similarities in involving improvisation and resourcefulness with heterogeneous elements in a composition, they diverge in their underlying objectives. Bricolage reflects a characteristic of mythological thought with limited materials, while collage embraces a conscious creative expression without any limitations.

Capriccio

'Capriccio', on the other hand, is a prevalent form of artistic expression in painting and

9 Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 18–20.

10 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Nature of Human Society Series (Letchworth, Hertfordshire: The Garden City Press Limited, 1966), 17–18.

11 Lévi-Strauss, 17–18.

12 Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 21.

13 Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 17.

drawing that embodies a multifaceted complexity characterised by intricate spatial and iconographic elements that invite diverse symbolic interpretations and is a medium often associated with collage.¹⁴ It employs techniques of selective composition, spatial and historical compression, iteration, creatively re-ordering, re-composing, and transforming buildings, ruins, and urban landscapes from memory, imagination, and architectural invention into an emulating and intriguing synthesis.¹⁵ Initially appearing plausible, the interplay between buildings, artefacts, and human figures reveals spatial tensions upon closer examination, engendering ambiguities and inviting multiple readings, unveiling its intricate and nuanced nature. The capriccio goes beyond mere visual appeal, demanding profound intellectual scrutiny to discern the familiar from the strange, the real from the foreign or enigmatic. In other words, it assembles disparate fragments, yielding a poetic image where each element seemingly harmonises with the others, but meticulous examination raises fundamental questions regarding their enigmatic convergence.

Capriccio is a pioneering force behind postmodern design strategies often called 'collage'. Despite its collage-like characteristics, it also shares similarities with montage, presenting scenes as a total whole. Stierli illustrates this relationship through the works of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.¹⁶ Piranesi's creations combine architectural motifs, real and imaginary elements, and existing structures, culminating in a fantastical fusion that encapsulates the architectural fantasies prominent in Italian art during the eighteenth century. While Piranesi's Carceri engravings are frequently cited as prime examples of capriccio, Stierli notes that they epitomise montage as an epistemological representation of space.¹⁷ Moreover, Eisenstein used Piranesi's approach to historicism and legitimised the avant-garde principle of cinematic montage,¹⁸ demonstrating an unbroken, mutually reinforcing relationship between these terms.

As a result, these terms share conceptual interrelations, supporting and developing one another. Capriccio and collage both express creative visions in art, whereas montage and photomontage emphasise image juxtaposition. Understanding the nuances and connections between these terms enriches the exploration of collage's conceptual evolution. Hence, for this study, 'collage' serves as an all-encompassing term encompassing these related concepts.

Transformation of Collage

To establish a methodological framework for comprehending the evolution of collage, it is pertinent to start with an examination of its origins in Cubism. While the Renaissance emphasised prioritising visual experience in artistic representation, Cubist artists, notably

14 Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 22.

15 Lucien Steil, "The Architectural Capriccio: Memory, Fantasy, Invention", in *The Architectural Capriccio: Memory, Fantasy and Invention*, ed. Lucien Steil (New York: Routledge, 2016).

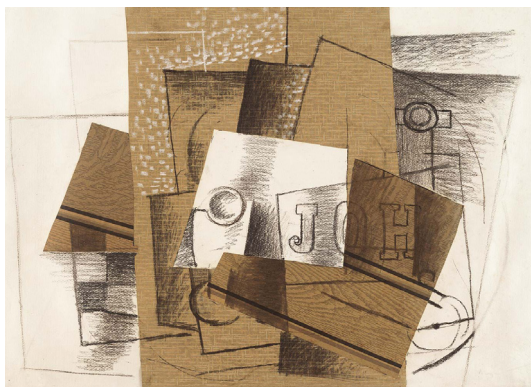
16 Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 22–25.

17 Stierli, 22–25.

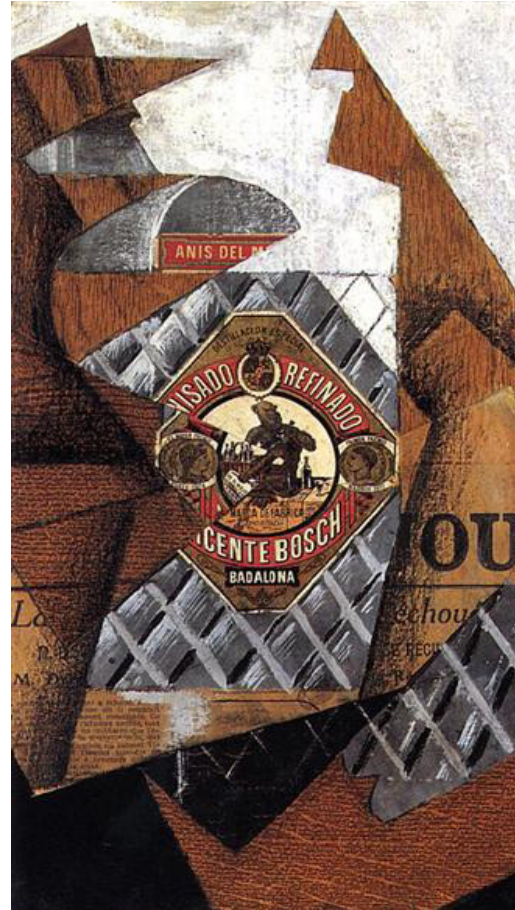
18 Steven Jacobs, "Eisenstein's Piranesi and Cinematic Space," in *Aspects of Piranesi: Essays on History, Criticism, and Invention*, ed. De Dirk Meyer, Bart Verschaffel, and Pieter-Jan Cierkens (Ghent: A&S Books, 2015), 142–59.



1 - *Still Life with Chair Caning*, designed by Pablo Picasso, 1912



2 - *Still Life with Glass and Letters*, designed by Georges Braque, 1914



3 - *The Bottle of Anis del Moro*, designed by Juan Gris, 1914

Pablo Picasso and George Braque, diverged from this approach. Instead, they portrayed various aspects of daily life through abstraction, merging materials, and fragmenting and synthesising forms. This enabled them to capture the spatial and material characteristics of ordinary subjects. Picasso and Braque, pioneers of this movement, experimented with collage in the opening years of the twentieth century. Their innovation, characterised as “the pasted-paper revolution”¹⁹ by American critic Clement Greenberg, entailed adhering objects from everyday life, like newspapers and ticket stubs, onto their artworks, creating a sense of unfamiliarity and peculiarity.

Picasso perceived collage as a means to evoke this sense of unfamiliarity, positing that displaced objects gain a unique essence when incorporated into a collage.²⁰ This sense of unfamiliarity was intended to provoke reflection and offer new perspectives, ushering in a new artistic movement. The innovative materials and techniques introduced by the Cubists were termed ‘papier collés’. This form of collage is the juxtaposition of pieces of paper, such as newspapers, wallpaper, or plain coloured paper, for their form, colour, pattern, or symbolic meaning.²¹ An early instance is seen in Picasso’s “Still Life with

19 Clement Greenberg and Diane Waldman, *Collage: The Pasted-Paper Revolution* (London: Crane Kalman Gallery, 1999).

20 Kathleen Vaughan, “Pieced Together: Collage as an Artist’s Method for Interdisciplinary Research”, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 4, no. 1 (2005).

21 Jennifer A E Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 2014, 2021.

Chair Caning”, abstracting a subject’s three-dimensional qualities into a two-dimensional composition through imitating patterns. [1]

Braque adopted this technique, incorporating ready-made materials and introducing textured papers, refining it beyond Picasso’s more rudimentary approach. [2] Another Cubist artist, Juan Gris, joined this movement and introduced a new concept to collage – fragmentation. Gris used oil paint on canvas, underpinning compositions with fragments and using a grid to organise figures and spaces, managing fragmentation. According to art historian Diane Waldman, Gris’s approach was “where Picasso and Braque were involved in the interplay between the bare paper and the fragments of collage that punctuated its surface, Gris locked together the pieces of any collage into one intricate ensemble”.²²

Although these are early examples of collage, it can be said that the Cubist technique of fragmentation employed in their collages serves to imply a three-dimensional space from multiple perspectives, allowing the exploration of three-dimensional potentialities within the confines of a two-dimensional environment. Through fragmentation and ambiguity of form, the concepts of layering and transparency are emphasised, creating a sense of spatiality. Juan Gris’s work, “The Bottle of Anís del Mono” exemplifies this, with fragments serving as figures and space representation, coexisting on the same surface with dynamic interaction.²³ [3] As a result, even in these early Cubist examples, collage demonstrates its capacity to simultaneously mediate multiple spatial and material conditions through fragments, offering insights into dynamic, temporal, and spatial dimensions.

Leading up to the First World War, the cubist collage underwent a transformative process, becoming a communication tool for artists to convey political and social unrest. This transformation began with movements like Futurism and Suprematism and continued with the emergence of Constructivism within the Russian Avant-Garde. The Russian Avant-Garde artists harnessed collage techniques to create highly political images, effectively using this artistic form to articulate social causes and embody the ideals of a new society. Likewise, the Dadaists, who identified themselves as proponents of “anti-art”, adopted collage as a means to reject established cultural and aesthetic values. Their collages resonated with the political fervour seen in the works of the Russian Avant-Garde, vehemently protesting against war and the political and social structures that underpinned it. While a dispute arose between the Russian Constructivists and Dadaist Raoul Hausmann over the claim of inventing this innovative way of expression through the use of photographic images, both movements played instrumental roles in the evolution of collage as an art form. They transformed collage into a new and expressive tool that responds to historical events and social changes through the combination of photographic images, reflecting the changing times and emotions of the period.

22 Diane Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object* (New York: Harry N Abrams Inc, 1992), 47.

23 In the work of Juan Gris, the fragmented compositional plane of a table becomes layered and interconnected spaces. Within this composition, a tripartite division into foreground, centre, and background surfaces becomes discernible, thereby engendering the exploration of various perspectives and points of view.

This transformation was made possible by the liberalisation of media use, which enabled collage to move beyond traditional platforms into a new medium, the photomontage. This adaptation of the media retained elements of its original form of the technique while simultaneously branching out. It transcended passive observation and instead emerged as a potent catalyst in reshaping collective consciousness. Lissitzky underscored photography's power and its universal language in propelling this transformative potential, affirming: "No other form of representation can encompass all individuals as profoundly as photography".²⁴ Because the composition of manipulated photographs possessed a striking ability to transcend linguistic and literary confines, effectively conveying propagandist narratives to its audience. German artist John Heartfield also acknowledged the manipulative potential of constructed images' power and stated:

*I started making photomontages during the First World War. There are a lot of things that got me into working with photos. The main thing is that I saw both what was being said and not being said with photos in the newspapers. ... I found out how you can fool people with photos, really fool them. ... You can lie and tell the truth by putting the wrong title or wrong captions under them, that's exactly what was being done. ... Then we pasted, I pasted and quickly cut out a photo and then put one under another.*²⁵

As Heartfield concurs, it was realised that the simple act of juxtaposing one photograph with another could carry important implications, especially when political or propagandistic fragments were used. Thus, this new medium transformed the artistic form of the juxtaposition of fragments into powerful visual language. Moreover, due to it depends on the visual, this technique diminished reliance on textual elements, thereby heightening the accessibility of resulting discourses. It became a charged endeavour centred on communication for educating, informing, and persuading the public through the composition of visual elements.

As the tumult of World War I subsided, Surrealism emerged as an extension of the preceding Dadaist movement. In contrast to the structured and rational principles underpinning Cubism, Surrealists embraced the practice of intuitive drawing, which served as a direct channel to plumb the depths of the unconscious mind. The term surrealism described an aspiration to dismantle the confines imposed by conscious cognition, thus facilitating the unfettered expression of thoughts, emotions, and concepts that defied conventional artistic methods. It epitomised an aim to transcend the limits of conscious thought, embarking on a journey into uncharted terrains of the unconscious to uncover the enigmatic aspects of the known and unknown knowns. This aim also impacted its collages, bringing together incompatible parts and different objects to create unexpected compositions. These resulting collage compositions, imbued with an ethereal, dreamlike quality, not only facilitated the visualisation of unexplored psychological depths but also materialised the manifestations of subconscious contemplation. An illustrative manifestation of this principle can be found in Max Ernst's composition, "Here Everything

24 Dawn Ades, *Photomontage*, Rev. and e, World of Art Library (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 63.

25 Magda Dragu, *Form and Meaning in Avant-Garde Collage and Montage*, 2020, 107.

is Still Floating”. [4] Ernst juxtaposed imagery of a fish skeleton and a beetle onto a photograph depicting a military aerial bombing or, from an alternative perspective, a boat and a skeletal fish floating together in the sky.²⁶ This juxtaposition transformed the scene into a maritime panorama, where a steamship encounters an immense fish. Despite the recognisable nature of the individual elements, they took on new symbolic significance when combined, adding unexpected depth to the composition. Therefore, this striking combination of apparently irreconcilable elements offers not only a new perspective but also the existence of an imaginative world combining satire and seduction.



4 - *Here Everything is Still Floating*, designed by Max Ernst, 1920

In the 1930s, escalating global tensions served to rekindle the utilitarian application of collage within the realm of politics. The medium was not only associated with the pro-revolutionary kinetic theatre of the agitprop artists but also intertwined with Dadaist demonstrations orchestrated as a response to the rising tide of Nazism. In the face of both Stalinist and Hitlerian regimes, those practising collage actively engaged in the process of creation. In 1929, for instance, John Heartfield collaborated with the AIZ (*Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, or *Illustrated Workers' Magazine*), the leading communist weekly publication during the Weimar Republic. Heartfield's prolific contributions included a multitude of cover designs that vehemently protested the ascendancy of Nazism. One notable example is the 1934 collage on the back cover of AIZ titled "Deutsche Naturgeschichte" (Natural History of Germany) with the subtitle "Metamorphosis". [5]

²⁶ Ades, *Photomontage*, 111.



5 - *Deutsche Naturgeschichte, Metamorphose*, designed by John Heartfield, 1934

In this collage, Heartfield juxtaposed politicians' heads with insects' bodies, conveying a powerful political message. The figures represented Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925), president of Germany from 1919 to 1925, depicted as a caterpillar; Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934), president from 1925 to 1934, portrayed as a chrysalis hanging from withered tree bark; and Adolf Hitler as a flying moth with a skull emblem. Heartfield added explanatory notes at the bottom, elucidating three different meanings of metamorphosis:

1. In mythology: the transformation of men into trees, animals, stones, etc. 2. In zoology: the development of many animal forms through a larva and pupa stage, for example, caterpillar, pupa, butterfly, 3. In the history of the Weimar Republic, Ebert, Hindenburg, and Hitler.²⁷

Like many of Heartfield's other works, this photomontage critiques the political system that contributed to the Second World War. The oak leaves symbolise the enduring strength of Germany, yet they are depicted as being destroyed and consumed by insects, serving as an allegory for the country's decline.²⁸ Although initially challenging to interpret, the interaction between the elements prompts viewers to reconsider the progress of the Weimar Republic in terms of disintegration or decay, a theme supported by Heartfield's chosen title, "Metamorphosis". The amalgamation, synthesis, and correlation of literary and iconographical references with contemporaneous political occurrences characterised Heartfield's politically charged photomontages, which had a political resonance at the time and were perceived as provocations. Consequently, collage assumed a more overtly political role, evolving into a tool for articulating dissent through the vehement distortion of imagery and language, effectively transforming into a weapon.²⁹

Transformation of collage in space

There has always been a relationship between collage and space, recognised since the collages of Gris. The Russian artist El Lissitzky pioneered a method known as Proun or 'project for the affirmation of the new,' comprising a sequence of paintings, collages, and assemblages collectively that take space as the subject.³⁰ According to Lissitzky, "Proun begins as a level surface, turns into a three-dimensional space model, and goes on to construct all the objects of everyday life. In this way, Proun goes beyond painting and the artist on the one hand and the machine and the engineer on the other, and advances to the construction of space, divides it by the elements of all dimensions and creates a new, many-faceted unity as a formal representation of our nature".³¹ Lissitzky's collages can be interpreted as intricate three-dimensional spatial compositions, combining simple geometric forms in a quest to encapsulate materiality and spatial profundity. In other words, Proun presented a medium that interweaves visual and spatial paradigms on a canvas. Thus, its characterisation leans toward that of a design or cartographic representation, surpassing its mere identity as a painting. Moreover, this propensity for collage to interact with space similarly can be seen in the oeuvre of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, a Bauhaus professor. Moholy-Nagy's collages, employing a distinct technique from Lissitzky's, but bearing analogous principles, construct spatial dimensions upon the surface. Diagonal lines within these compositions imply dynamic motion and the fragments' composition provides a multidimensional scope. As a result, in the hands of artists such as Lissitzky

27 John Heartfield, *Photomontages of the Nazi Period* (London: Gordon Fraser Gallery [for] Universe Books, 1977), 124.

28 Heartfield, 124.

29 David Evans and Sylvia Gohl, *Photomontage : A Political Weapon* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1986).

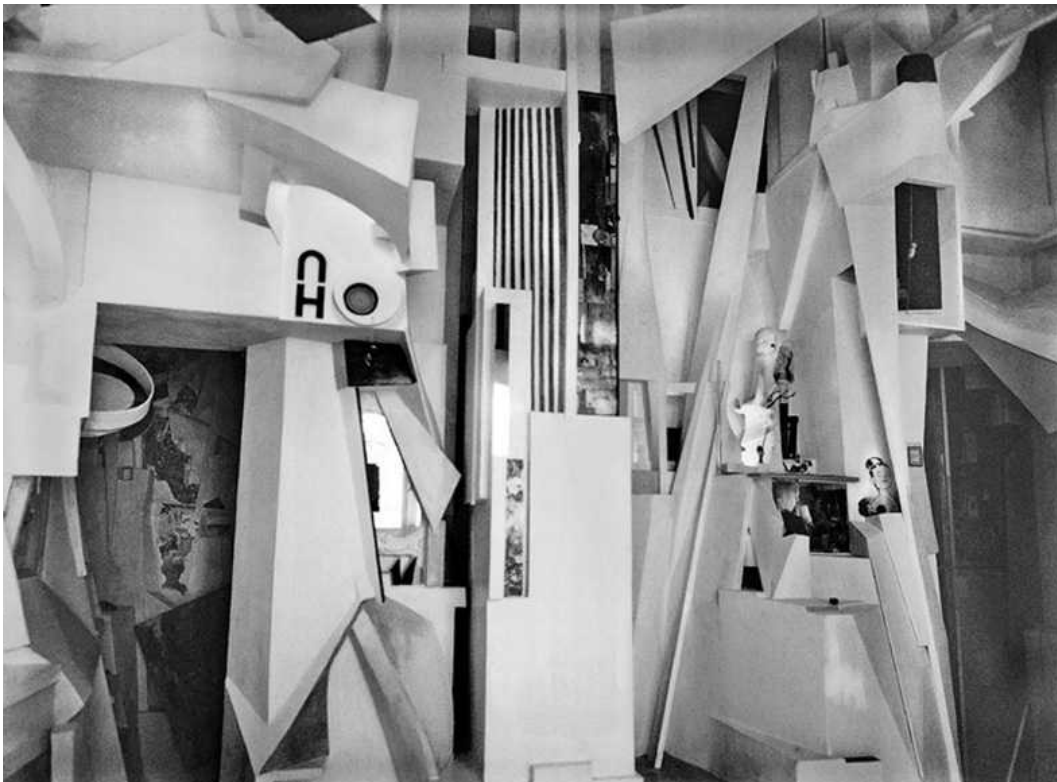
30 Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 68.

31 Shields, 68.

and Moholy-Nagy, collage has become a spatial practice in which the third dimension is perceived in two dimensions.

Kurt Schwitters, on the other hand, established a distinct relationship with physical space through his collage practice. An extension of Schwitters' collage practice, called Merzbau structures, began at his residence in Hanover and later extended to Norway and England. In contrast to Lissitzky and Moholy-Nagy, Schwitters' collages can be seen as three-dimensional constructs that inhabit real space, effectively existing within it. [6] He adhered to the fundamental principles of collage, crafting compositions in space using elemental materials characteristic of any collage, including found objects, fabric fragments, surfaces, and newspaper clippings.

Dorothea Dietrich, who analysed Schwitters' collage practice in her book *The Collages of Kurt Schwitters*, notes that his intention with Merzbau was to create a Gesamtkunstwerk,³² a complete and harmonious work of art, where painting, collage, sculpture, and architecture coexist on equal footing. However, Schwitters' Merzbau proposed a radical vision that grappled with the tensions between representation and abstraction, as well as the dichotomy of high culture versus mass culture. Through his collage practice, Schwitters confronted the realism of photographic imagery with pure form and colour, juxtaposed texture with glossy surfaces, and merged high abstraction with the everyday banality of commercial advertising. He created the legitimacy of all visual elements, regardless of their specific form, scale, or content. For Schwitters, the fragmentary nature



6 - Merzbau, designed by Kurt Schwitters, 1933

32 Dorothea Dietrich, *The Collages of Kurt Schwitters: Tradition and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 130.

of collage was both a reflection of the contemporary social situation and a method of personal expression of how disparate parts could be brought together to form a larger, coherent whole. From this perspective, a new range of work was made possible through his way of thinking as collage transformed into space.

Artistic definitions of collage

This chapter delves into the historical evolution of collage, exploring its multifaceted journey through the annals of art history. Having elucidated the artistic aspects of collage and its transformation in the preceding section, the focus now shifts to the emergence of definitions grounded in the rich tapestry of art history. These definitions, borne out of the nuanced historical development of collage, hold intrinsic parallels with the creative process at the heart of this research endeavour. As such, the chapter serves a crucial purpose in providing nuanced definitions of collage and unravelling its capacities, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the artefacts emerging from the research practice.

Collage is defined as the combination of fragments or elements with heterogeneous qualities within the image. These reproduced images or fragments are juxtaposed or synthesised, creating a productive and dialectical relationship between them. The heterogeneity of these fragments can apply not only to a specific composition but also to works with successive or moving images, making them spatial or temporal in nature. Theories of collage underscore the importance of the heterogeneity of these fragments, emphasising their role in shaping the overall meaning and interpretation of the artwork. In other words, the significance of a collage lies in how its fragments interact and relate to one another, resulting in emergent relationships that constitute the composition. It is worth noting that the meaning of a collage is not solely dependent on the original context of its fragments; instead, it is reconstructed within the collage itself. In *Collage, Assemblage and the Found Object*, Waldman notes the various levels of meaning attributed to a fragment within a collage; “the original identity of the fragment or object and all of the history it brings with it; the new meaning it gains in association with other objects or elements; and the meaning it acquires as the result of its metamorphosis into a new entity”.³³ Thus, the process of combining and juxtaposing fragments in a collage plays a crucial role in shaping its meaning, transcending the individual significance of each element. Whether a fragment carries visual or textual meaning, its relationship with other components can lead to preservation or decontextualisation, resulting in the creation of new meanings. The structural dimension of collage, concerned with how the fragments are assembled, intertwines with the referential or indexical aspect, as collages evoke associations with external concepts or experiences. The confluence of spatial, material, and intellectual content within the collage occurs through the synthesis of unrelated fragments, contributing to a rich tapestry of meanings.

33 Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*, 11.

Collage is a spatial organisation for communication. It involves open spaces between fragments, and the struggle of these fragments to relate to one another during the creative process contributes to creating spatial dimensions. This spatial aspect often leads the viewer to derive meaning in a dialectical manner, a concept described by montage theorist Walter Benjamin as the 'shock' experienced by the viewer. In his work, *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin focused on literary montage, which he defined as "to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components".³⁴ Within this project, Benjamin explored the political potential of the ruined fragment, functioning as a 'dialectical image', capturing dialectical contradictions in a moment rather than presenting a linear argument.³⁵

In his work 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin distinguished between concentration as the optical mode of viewing a painting and distraction as the tactile experience of architecture.³⁶ He argued for shock as a progressive way of experiencing art, suggesting that using montage as an aesthetic process could enable an absent-minded viewer to critically examine the artwork, particularly in film, where the audience occupies the position of the critic. According to Benjamin, this politicised form of art brings attention to the potential of the relationship between fragments to create a dialogical space. Although Benjamin highlights the dialogical potential of fragments in montage, it can also be observed in collage. Collage, therefore, creates meaning through the spatial relationships of its fragments. As the viewer takes in the fragments arranged side by side or one below the other, a process of spatialisation occurs in their mind. The visual disruption between the fragments becomes a space for analysis and interpretation, inviting the viewer to engage in a dialectical exploration of the artwork's significance.

Collage is polyfocal. The interplay between these different foci creates a liberating space that encourages freedom of thought and movement. It offers a dynamic and

34 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999).

35 According to Benjamin, the arcade, as a form of architecture, no longer represented the desires of the people but rather symbolised the ephemeral and destructive nature of capitalism in the early 20th century. The allegorical figure of the passage as a ruin became essential to Benjamin as it embodied an appreciation for the transience of things and demonstrated how an 'amorphous fragment' could produce multiple meanings instead of a singular 'organic totality.' It offered a space for reflection on the transience of human and material existence, thus representing the dialectical potential of fragments. In 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', Benjamin emphasised that the essential quality of a dialectical image is its ability to produce a shock, noting that "Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock". In her book *The Dialectic of Seeing*, Susan Buck-Morss also supported Benjamin's dialectical interpretation of the image, suggesting that it could lead the collective consciousness to a political "awakening". Benjamin, thus, viewed the inter-fragmentary space in collage as having significant political implications, defining the process of organising any aesthetic fragment as assemblage, where a fragment disrupts the context in which it is placed, creating a political and progressive form. In Benjamin; Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 253–64; Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press, 1990).

36 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Great Ideas; 56 (London: Penguin, 2008).

embodied experience to the viewer, pushing the boundaries of perception and inviting exploration and comprehension of each fragment. Each viewer, bringing their unique perspective, contributes to the diverse interpretations and thought systems when engaging with collaged fragments, resulting in polysemy – the existence of multiple interpretations. In the introduction to the works of architect and collagist Nils-Ole Lund, Christian W. Thomsen points out that Lund’s artistic approach intricately weaves cultural fragments with architecture and art, leading to creative conflicts within the compositions.³⁷ The collages, thus, remain open to various readings, heavily influenced by the viewer’s prior knowledge and associative imagination. Thomsen likens the experience of engaging with Lund’s collages to a metaphorical “laboratory experiment” of collage, where the possibilities for interpretation are extensive.³⁸ However, this aspect of multifaceted interpretation is not unique to Lund’s work alone but extends to collage as an artistic genre. Unlike the construction of perspective, which fixates the viewer to an ideal point of view, collage offers a more fluid and ever-changing nature. Viewers become active participants, navigating through a rich tapestry of visual and conceptual elements. This active involvement allows them to uncover new layers of meaning with each fragment, transforming collage into a realm of constant discovery and interpretation.

Collage is a world that opens doors to envisioning a reality yet unexplored. Its visual form goes beyond the traditional notion of ‘representation’ and instead strives to expand the boundaries of reality into uncharted territories. It provides a space where the unthinkable can be conceived, the non-existent can manifest, and the imperceptible can materialise. Through the juxtaposition of heterogenous fragments and the interstices between them, the collage brings forth elements from the concealed depths of reality, which are not immediately apparent on the surface. It is within these fragments that this new world takes shape, where actuality seamlessly blends with the imagined, giving rise to a distinct reality within the mind of the viewer. It is a reality that belongs solely to the collage itself. Independent of any specific context, it relies on the personal interpretation and imagination of its viewer.

Collage is a language that everybody can read, a way of expression. It manifests as a visual language, offering a universal platform for communication. Through this unique form of expression, individuals can comprehend and interpret myriad ideas, emotions, narratives, themes, and even political and provocative messages conveyed within its fragmented structure. Serving as a visual language, collage empowers collagists to convey their inner selves and establish profound connections with their viewer. Unlike conventional spoken or written languages, collage lacks structured grammar or syntax, relying instead on the imagery and

37 Christian W.Thomsen, “Nils-Ole Lund: The World as Collage”, in *Collage Architecture* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1990), 6–17.

38 W.Thomsen, 11.

connotations of its heterogeneous elements. In this context, Umberto Eco's *A Theory of Semiotics*, a work exploring the philosophy of signs and their role in communication and understanding, provides a theoretical framework for grasping the communicative nature of collage.³⁹ The fragments present in a collage serve as reminders of specific cultures, ideas, and subjective or objective thoughts, and the density of these fragments compels us to comprehend and even speak this fragmental language. As Eco describes it, "Two clichés make us laugh, but a hundred clichés move us because we sense dimly that the clichés are talking among themselves and celebrating a reunion".⁴⁰ Therefore, the heterogeneity and interplay of fragments in collage contribute to the rich and captivating experience of engaging with ideas as a mode of visual language.

Marshall Brown, an architect and collagist, defines collage as 'a transgressive act' that stretches the boundaries of artistic expression by juxtaposing, remixing, and merging images from diverse sources.⁴¹ Collage defies conventional aesthetics, lays bare false dichotomies, and challenges preconceived notions. This artistic and innovative form offers multifaceted interpretations to individuals; it serves as a conduit for satirical critique, cynical perspectives, provocation, dreams, spontaneity, spatial representation, or even a reflection of life itself. Collage embodies a spirit of challenge and provocation, giving rise to moments of encounter and showcasing a dynamic interplay of parts and wholes through improvisation and artistic expression. It expands the limits of imagination, enabling both the collagist and the viewer to transcend their mental confines and explore beyond the visible realm.⁴² While each element within a collage retains its individual structure, the resulting composition stands as a unique analysis independent of its constituent parts. Collage explores the possibilities of reconciling opposing perspectives, offering a holistic viewpoint that seamlessly integrates past, present, and future. Its subjective nature allows for a diverse and collective presentation, encompassing a wide range of perspectives within a confined space, thus providing viewers with a rich life experience. Each carefully selected and juxtaposed piece possesses the power to stimulate imagination, trigger memories, and evoke emotions through vivid depictions. Thus, from an alternative perspective, it can be described as a way of thinking.

According to these definitions, collage can be said to transcend the mere act of cutting and pasting. Collage manifests itself as a multifaceted, interdisciplinary and versatile medium. It evolves with the needs of the collagist, who has the agency to forge its own interpretations rooted in distinctive collage encounters or to conform to pre-existing definitions. This is why it can be described as an alternative realm of knowing, learning,

39 Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, *Advances in Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976).

40 Umberto Eco, "'Casablanca': Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage", *SubStance* 14, no. 2 (1985): 3–12.

41 Marshall Brown, "Colage Is...Collage Ain't", in *The Architecture of Collage*, ed. James Glisson (Zurich: Park Books, 2022), 12–13.

42 Ali Asghar Adibi, *Collage: A Process in Architectural Design*, 1st ed. 20, University of Tehran Science and Humanities Series, 2021, 8.

understanding, narrating and speaking, all communicated through a universal language – its own language.

Transformation of collage in architecture

Collage, a practice intricately linked to spatial concepts since Cubist papier collé, has evolved into a concept within architectural practice. Its capacity to juxtapose diverse materials within a composition offers to render collage a transitional metaphor, a mode of perception, and an expressive medium that bridges the gap between abstract ideation and visualisation and their manifestation in built form. Therefore, it can be mentioned the multifaceted influence of collage on architecture. Firstly, emerging from the fragmentation of analytical cubism, collage extended a synthetic, simultaneous spatial experience wherein planes became fragmented, and the conventions of linear perspective's transparency were questioned. This synthetic cubist approach served as a blueprint for Siegfried Giedion's exploration of space-time and visual culture.⁴³ Through this lens, collage metamorphosed into a tool for constructing an innovative architectural lexicon, translating the visual language of simultaneity into the static realm of architectural creation. The works of Kurt Schwitters, a Bauhaus artist, on the other hand, occupied the space, transcending the two-dimensional, spatially confined realm, propelling collage into the domain of three-dimensional space. By incorporating industrial production's mechanical assembly techniques, collage thus managed to infiltrate space, unifying disparate elements and forging connections. This process simultaneously birthed new temporal dimensions and catalysed transformative endeavours by melding fragmented memories with a novel corporeal existence. Synthesising diverse elements through collage became a potent means of navigating the interplay between abstract ideas and the realisation of innovative built forms. This dynamic forged a dialogue encompassing destruction and reformation, absence and memory, obliteration and reinterpretation, and the interplay of past, present, and even anticipated futures within the spatial confines.

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter introduced an innovative paradigm to architectural collage through their work *Collage City*, published in 1987. In this book, they accept collage as a way of thinking about cities and define collage as “a method deriving its virtue from its irony”.⁴⁴ According to them, collage “seems to be a technique for using things and simultaneously disbelieving in them”. Rowe and Koetter perceived collage not only as an artistic practice but also as a strategic tool, allowing utopia to be approached as an image and advocating for its consideration in fragments without absolute acceptance.⁴⁵ They noted that collage could support “the utopian illusion of changelessness and finality, might even fuel a reality of change, motion, action, and history”.⁴⁶ They imagined collage as a metaphor, enabling a comprehensive critique of modernist urban planning ideologies and advancing an urban design ethos founded upon heterogeneity. Their critical framework underpinned a realisation, collaging together city plans emerging from differing design

43 Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture : The Growth of a New Tradition*.

44 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), 149.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.



7 - Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper, designed by Mies van der Rohe, 1921

ideologies, collage could not only subsist within the realm of architectural imagery, but also become a cognitive framework for a way of thinking.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe embraced the potential of collage and montage for the representation and production of architecture. For Mies, collage served as a means of representing architectural ideas, experimenting with different approaches. In his early photocollages and photomontages, he aimed for an atmospheric impression rather than architectural precision, creating a blurred effect.⁴⁷ For instance, in his Friedrichstraße skyscraper project in Berlin, he placed his project in the city context and employed an illusionistic perspective. Contrasting the city surroundings with his architecture,

⁴⁷ Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis : Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, 145.

the image did not offer a definite image but instead became a 'floating' space in the photomontage.⁴⁸[7]

In contrast, in his later works, Mies emphasised the layering properties of collage by presenting more static images, as if observed through a window.⁴⁹ [8] His drawings and photocollages for the private vacation house of the Resors in rural Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for instance, focused on parallel layering without relying on inherent three-dimensionality. Instead of specific spaces, he presented planar elements in absolute unity within an abstract plane floating in space, creating an architectural space by overlapping two-dimensional layers. Despite these collages emphasising flatness and depthlessness, they represent both space and its potential condition. While there were limited architectural fragments in his collages, they offer a narrative about the definition of architecture.⁵⁰ Thus, Mies recognised collage's potential in his work, using it to depict architectural ideas and establish the relationship between space and image in his architectural thinking. The 1960s witnessed a resurgence of collage within the realms of art and architecture, transforming architectural propositions into vehicles of communication with wider society. Avant-garde architectural groups, including Archigram, Superstudio, Rem Koolhaas, and time[space]lab, harnessed collage as a communicative tool. Through this medium, they envisaged, critiqued, documented, and memorialised the future. For instance, Archigram centred its endeavours on consumer culture, arguing through their collages that society should "treat buildings as consumer products and the real justification of consumer



8 - *Resor House project*, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, designed by Mies van der Rohe, 1937-8

48 Stierli, 161.

49 Stierli, 159.

50 Stierli, 167.

products is that they are the direct expression of a freedom to choose”.⁵¹ Their collages dismantled the normative conventions of production drawings, instead championing an architecture of indeterminacy. These collages, created by fragments from drawings and images cut-out from magazines, pounded the visualisation of their criticisms. The disjunction between these fragments imparted both a jarring impact and a narrative quality akin to a fictionalised story. [9] The “Tuned Suburb” project, for example, proposed “Popular Paks” - prefabricated architectural units which, according to Ron Herron, the collagist of this image, were “accretions of modern technology that showed how existing places could be turned up, lifted to another dimension”.⁵²



9 - The Tuned Suburb, designed by Archigram, 1968

Superstudio, on the other hand, adopted a more politically charged collage language, employing architectural metaphors, to communicate their ideals. They argued that architecture uniquely realises cosmic order on earth, bringing coherence to existence and affirming humanity’s rational capacities.⁵³ According to them, “it is a ‘modern utopia’ to imagine a near future in which all architecture will be created with a single act”.⁵⁴ Using collage as a medium to construct modern utopias, they created open-to-interpretation images featuring simple geometric images, architectural sections, and surface drawings devoid of direct messages. Seeking critical engagement, Superstudio combined perspective grid drawings with city fragments, creating immersive spaces for contemplation. These collages, formed by juxtaposing fragments and surfaces open to interpretation, offered viewers a reflective space. Without explicit messages, Superstudio’s works extended an invitation for viewers to think critically within the collaged images. In this way, collage became a medium through which Superstudio presented a critique of the city, encouraging viewers to interpret and contemplate their unique perspective. [10]

Similarly, Rem Koolhaas adopted collage as a mode of expression and design, synthesising elements from Archigram and Superstudio. According to Koolhaas, collage is a method for “systematic idealisation, a systematic overestimation of the extant, a bombardment of speculation that invests even the most mediocre aspect with retroactive conceptual and ideological charge”.⁵⁵ His work “Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture”

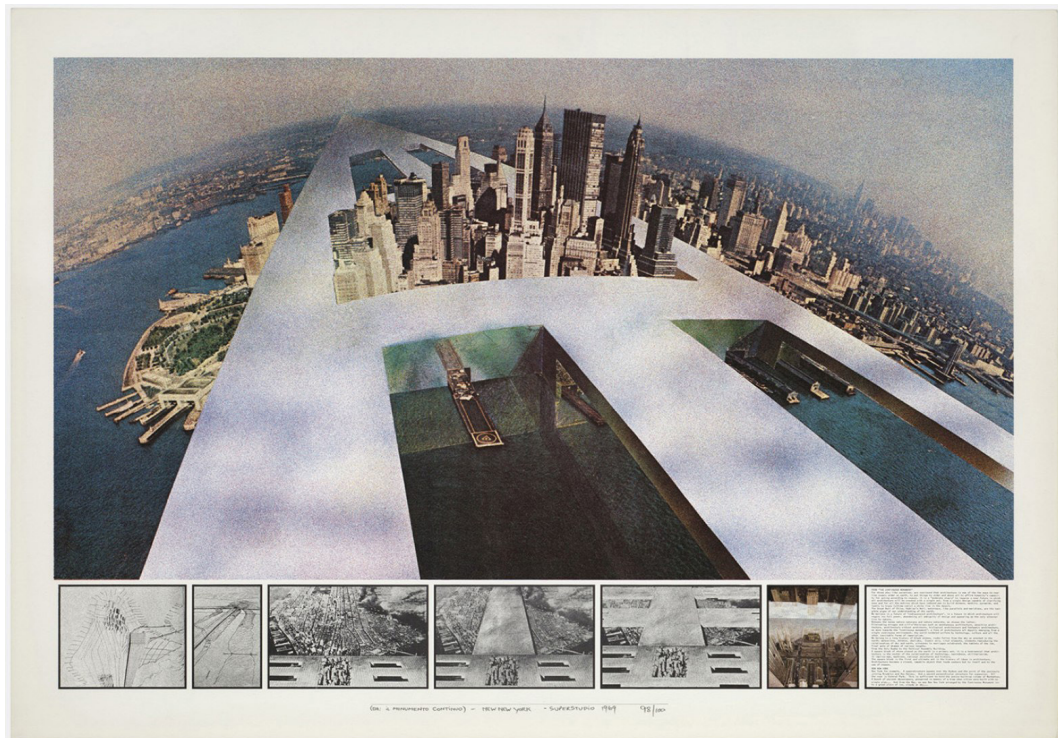
51 Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 100.

52 Shields, 101.

53 Shields, 106.

54 Ibid.

55 Shields, 111.



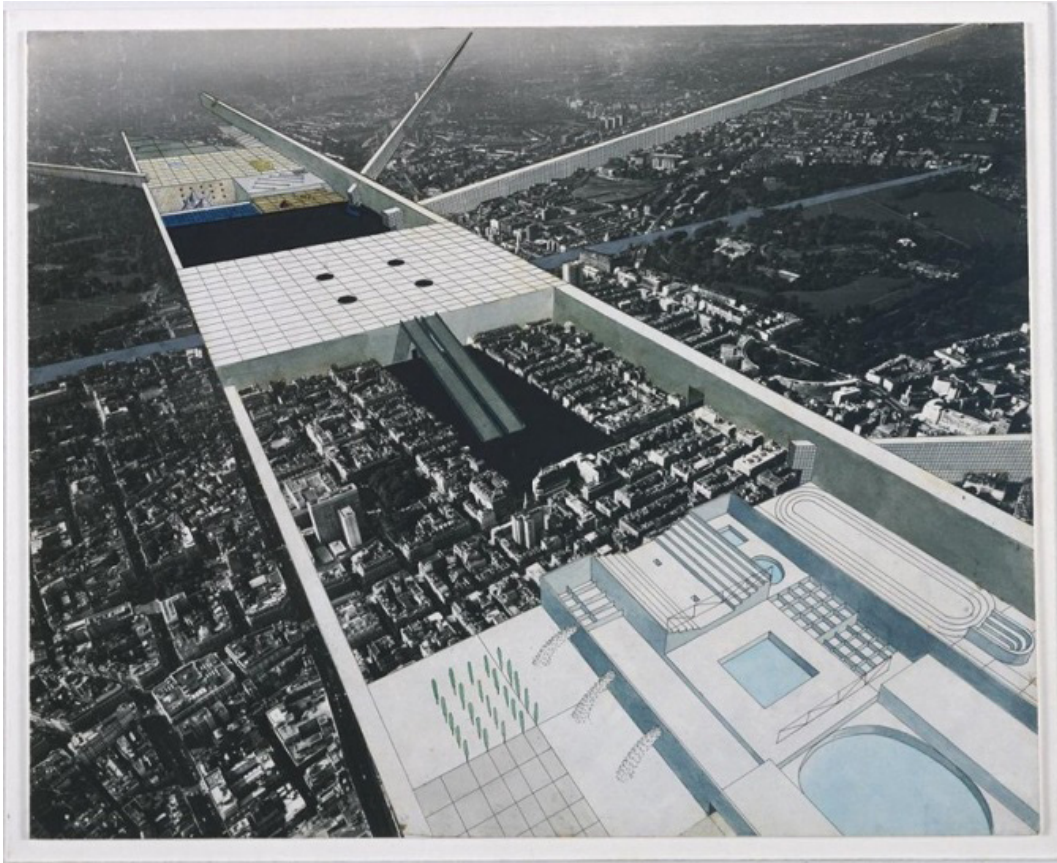
10 - *Il Monumento Continue*, designed by Superstudio, 1969.

exemplifies this collage language. [11] Koolhaas constructed a collage narrative employing his architectural imagination, inspired by the Berlin Wall. Articulating his perception with the assertion that “Neither those in the West nor those in the East are free; only those trapped in the wall are truly free”,⁵⁶ Koolhaas uses collage to portray architecture’s latent capacity to “host fringe activities and unexpected events”,⁵⁷ highlighting its potential for divisions within the city with ironic language in collaged image. Within this constructed collage, a dichotomy emerged, wherein the city delineated itself into sides of bad and good. Confronted with an escalating tide of migration from bad to good, a border manifested - a wall - to arrest this migration. This collage embraced bold gestures, realised through gridlines superimposed upon an aerial cityscape, offering both a presentation of the project and a critical view of the urban divide. It can be said that from his intricate and thought-provoking imagery, Koolhaas uses collage not only to propose a project but also as a powerful means of representation and criticism.

As a result, it is evident that collage has undergone a transformative evolution. Initially, it originated as a combination of disparate fragments, wherein the interplay among these fragments was discerned, ultimately fostering a symbiotic relationship with a particular artistic milieu. Within the context of these dynamic relationships, collage has emerged as a visual medium for encapsulating intellectual ruminations and as a modality for creative expression among many artists and architects. As the global landscape witnessed a surge in socio-political predicaments, the inherently fragmentary structure of collage underwent a metamorphic shift. It transformed into an instrument for constructing compositions

⁵⁶ Jeffrey Kipnis, *Perfect Acts of Architecture* (New York: Columbus, Ohio, NY: Museum of Modern Art, Wexner Center for the Arts, 2001), 14.

⁵⁷ Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 113.



11- Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: The Strip, designed by Rem Koolhaas, 1972

centred around themes of provocation, dissent, and activism. Consequently, it evolved into a political medium, using its fragmented vernacular to convey profoundly resonant messages. Its role expanded beyond the mere comprehension and interpretation of world events, extending to the fabrication of imaginative realms, rendering the unfamiliar recognisable and the conceptualised perceptible.

Collage facilitated the portrayal and explication of space in two dimensions while simultaneously existing within the realm of three-dimensional existence. Retaining its foothold within this creative domain, it metamorphosed into a design tool, its inherently political and provocative character enabling effective communication and fostering a landscape of interpretative potential. Moreover, its ambit transcended the boundaries of creation and presentation, permeating into the realm of ideation and obtaining recognition as a metaphorical construct. Thus, it transcended a rudimentary delineation of cutting and adhering, evolving into a polymorphic conceptual entity that defies singular categorisation. Within this context, many definitions and uses of collage have come to light.

Theorist-architect Lebbeus Woods applied the use of this multifaceted and multidisciplinary method in contested spaces, and in this context, he proposed a holistic perspective. Describing his method as solely collage or montage would be overly restrictive. However, in his projects, he has harnessed diverse techniques, ranging from site comprehension to the presentation of his personal interpretations and projects. He has sought to elucidate

the city's condition through collaged expressions, making capriccio-like images, treating the city as a fragmented composition, and presenting his projects akin to a cinematic sequence or a narrative with a discernible beginning and end, like a concept more aptly termed montage.

In the second chapter of this part, I will examine Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo project to provide a theoretical background to this practice by examining how he approached contested sites, as well as an analysis of the techniques he used. This provides context for my own approach to Nicosia through my collage practice.

Contested Space

Contested spaces can be explained as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in the context of highly asymmetrical relations of power'.⁵⁸ Frank Gaffikin and Mike Morrissey describe contested spaces in relation to conflict in two forms. The first kind of conflict concerns the issue of pluralism, where different groups may experience imbalances in power, welfare, and status. An example of this is Chicago, where race has played a significant role in shaping the city's social landscape both historically and currently. The second form of dispute involves sovereignty, where there are similar disagreements about equity, rights, and social entitlement, but they are also intertwined with questions about the legitimacy of the state. An example of this can be seen in Belfast, where there is an ongoing conflict about the legitimacy of the state and its ties to the ethno-nationalist identity between Catholics/Nationalists/Republicans and Protestants/Unionists.⁵⁹ These are spaces where the coexistence of different ideas and ideals causes conflict and spaces where conflict can arise as people defend socio-cultural boundaries. These are spaces where diverse groups claim dominance over shared territorial domains. Here, individual identities are involved in acrimonious disputes generated by the fervent defence of ethnic affiliations. Contested spaces are areas where a multitude of voices, perspectives, identities, and beliefs attempt to coexist, yet often find their coexistence results in conflict.

Spaces remain contested due to an inherent inability to reconcile longstanding divisions and, consequently, an inability to overcome the multiple challenges inherent in societal dichotomies. However, the city space is not necessarily defined by conflict but nevertheless includes room for conflict. Thus, such conflicts often catalyse the fragmentation of spaces. This fragmentation manifests either as a division of the city or through the emergence of explicitly or implicitly segregated zones within the urban fabric.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that each case is different from the other. While many regions and cities can be analysed through the lens of contested spaces, the conflicts that arise within urban settings have their own unique interpretations, each of which is rooted in specific historical underpinnings and interwoven with distinct

58 Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone", in *Mass Culture and Everyday Life*, 2014.

59 Frank Gaffikin and Mike Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities: Collaborative Shaping of Contested Space*, *Planning in Divided Cities: Collaborative Shaping of Contested Space*, 2011, 1.

and localised cultural conditions. Therefore, in order to address particular cities, a comprehensive assimilation of each case is needed, leading to the formulation of an autonomous approach tailored to its particular context. On the other hand, the divided cities also share a common set of existential conflict factors. Among these factors, nationalism and sectarianism stand out prominently. These terms encapsulate the clash between varying religious and cultural beliefs, which, though not inherently adversarial, often culminate in widespread violence. Another commonality is that spatial divisions are sometimes offered as temporary mitigations become permanent. While these temporary separations have often been implemented to prevent further turmoil and violence, the absence or inability to find a solution concretises them and even blocks potential avenues for conflict resolution.

The ideal approach does not involve the creation of partitioned cities. However, the lack of viable solutions to the challenges within these cities has inadvertently fostered the genesis of contested spaces. An illustrative instance is the inception of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland in 1968, which consequently led to the demarcation of Belfast with so-called 'peacelines', isolating working-class Catholic and Protestant inhabitants. Similarly, a seventeen-year-long civil war in Beirut transformed a mere 'Ligne de demarcation' into a complex sectarian maze. In Jerusalem, the Green Line was patrolled by Israeli and Jordanian militias for nineteen years. The Croatian and Bosniak communities in Mostar, since 1992, have cleaved the city into distinct halves along an Austro-Hungarian boulevard. Meanwhile, in Nicosia, a street flanked by two walls has delineated Turkish and Greek Cypriots since 1974, the road itself becoming a 'Buffer Zone'.⁶⁰

In such divided cities, a complex relationship exists between space, place and identity formation. Within these urban contexts, spaces are imbued with competing narratives and marked with conflict, and they become inextricably intertwined with the disputes they harbour. However, these spaces not only serve as physical locations of the texture of the city's conflicts but also as common places where divergent dialogues and fragmented societal constructs coexist within the confines of a city. Historian Joël Kotek uses the term 'frontier cities' for these cities and describes them as a territory where two dreams fight for coexistence.⁶¹

In 'frontier cities,' factions enmeshed in antagonistic interactions validate their existence by cultivating distinctive spatial practices within the contested domains. These groups harness these spatial domains as canvases upon which they articulate their ideological stances and uphold their advocated principles. The tangible manifestations of this phenomenon include flags, emblems, graffiti, and murals that conspicuously adorn the contested spaces. These emblematic elements serve a dual purpose: not only do they function as assertions of the convictions held by those who claim to these spaces, but they also serve to provoke reactions from opposing factions. Hence, within the contested

60 Jon Calame and Ester Charlesworth, *Divided Cities : Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*, City in the Twenty-First Century Book Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 1.

61 Joël Kotek, "Divided Cities in the European Cultural Context," *Progress in Planning* 52, no. 3 (1999): 227–37.

space, “the political culture intentionally invests cultural landscape with contentious ideological messages - obvious and subtle mnemonic and didactic devices that remind citizens of their loyalties and responsibilities”.⁶² This amalgamation of factors inevitably converts the spatial domain into the focal point, or in other words, the core of the ongoing discourse. Consequently, the contested space evolves into an active participant in the conflicts, with its physical contours and symbolism assuming agency as a medium for the prevailing debates and contentions.

Contested spaces occupy an area within the city that serves as reminders of division and ongoing conflicts. These are spaces where divergent cultural, religious, national, and ethnic identities intersect, often leading to heightened tensions and animosities. Although many of them are established temporarily to address security concerns, they signify a more profound schism within the urban fabric. Moreover, they not only erect barriers within physical city zones but also foster isolation among different societal factions. Therefore, these contested spaces cause intricate and intractable processes within urban studies. Despite the plethora of proposed plans and policies aimed at resolving territorial disputes within cities, the realities of these contested spaces undermine the feasibility of such initiatives, relegating them to the realm of theoretical constructs. As a result, the envisioned future of harmonious urban living remains largely unattained or, at best, only partially realised.⁶³

Planning for peace-making

In *Planning in Divided Cities*, Morrissey and Gaffikin analyse contested spaces through the analysis of divided city examples. The research notes that many conflicts are based on sensitive issues of territory and space and that, since planning is fundamentally concerned with shaping social space, it is inevitably intertwined with the politics of peace-making in contested space.⁶⁴ This connection elucidates peace-making processes through planning strategies. According to their research, policies designed for contested areas often ignore the complex realities of being contested, leading to a mismatch between planning objectives and realised outcomes.

Contested regions are characterised by intricate physical, social, political, and ideological dimensions that demand acknowledgement. These dimensions are typically deeply ingrained in notions of sovereignty and identity. Effective communication becomes a formidable challenge as each faction endeavours to assert itself. Parties primarily pursue self-interest, particularly when power imbalances prevail, often prioritising dominance over collaborative peace. Resource competition further compounds the issue. Physical and financial resource allocation between conflicting societies within divided regions becomes a pivotal point of contention. Many of these challenges also have historical backgrounds that require careful consideration of the perspectives of all parties. Notably,

62 Mike Morrissey and Frank Gaffikin, “Planning for Peace in Contested Space”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (2006).

63 Morrissey and Gaffikin.

64 Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Plan. Divid. Cities Collab. Shap. Contested Sp.*, 4.

external influences also shape these contested areas, a factor that must be considered in any peace-building endeavour. Consequently, the process of promoting peace in disputed territories is complex and long-term, and there are multiple realities that need to be taken into account depending on the specific situation of the disputed area.⁶⁵

Peace policies based on planning in contested spaces often rely on the principle of neutrality.⁶⁶ However, Morrissey and Gaffikin's research critiques 'neutrality' within planning strategies for peace-making in disputed areas.⁶⁷ The research argues that this is illusory, as apolitical technical experts use it to maintain a veneer of impartiality, deliberately ignoring complex realities. In contrast, they note that the politics of peace needs to provide a blueprint for novel spatial planning methodologies and approaches that foster sustainable, comprehensive, inclusive, and participatory urban development. They offer a number of principles to advance the integrated transformation process in contested spaces:

- *Distinction between quick fixes and long-term transformation, emphasising the need for peace-building efforts both at local levels and in political discourse.*
- *Division doesn't have to lead to violence; peacebuilding in divided cities should focus on reducing armed conflict, not erasing all conflict.*
- *The main divide is between those advocating violence and those promoting non-violence for conflict resolution.*
- *Sectarianism and racism fuel violent conflict and must be targeted through proactive policies and interventions.*
- *Peacebuilding must consider broader societal shifts like gender roles, economic changes, demographics, and migration.*
- *Prioritising resources for troubled neighbourhoods can perpetuate conflict and may send out a signal that the worst behaviour earns the most reward; a balanced approach is crucial.*
- *Creating safe spaces for dialogue across divides that evolve into wider public engagement.*
- *Improved urban governance and collaboration are essential for effective peace-building initiatives.*
- *Collaboration culture should be incentivised, addressing economic and social divisions caused by conflict.*
- *Inclusive local democracy and fair regeneration efforts are necessary, distinguishing genuine community leadership from sectarianism.*
- *Core concepts like "human rights" and "peace" can be interpreted differently; open discourse is vital.*
- *Participative action research, comparative insights, and evaluation are*

65 Ibid.

66 The planning process in Belfast is centred around the principle of neutrality. In Nicosia, the Nicosia Master Plan and the New Vision were also intended to be operationalised on the basis of the principle of neutrality. In Morrissey and Gaffikin, "Planning for Peace in Contested Space"; Nicosia Master Plan, "Nicosia Master Plan Final Report" (Nicosia, 1984).

67 Ibid.

essential for informed intervention.

- Foster peace networks, distribute learning materials and fund anti-sectarianism efforts.

- Balance support for single-identity work with encouragement for cross-community efforts.

- Cross-community work should be transformative, addressing core disputes and not just surface interactions.

- Change is needed for better results; innovation requires risk-taking.

- Monitoring “peace funding” should consider the costs of inaction and lessons from failures.

- Peacebuilding is integral to all aspects of creating a new society, not confined to special programs.

- Building relationships among adversaries and facilitating remembrance for change is important.

- Non-violent approaches can be complex; core values guide principled action.⁶⁸

As a result, there are many factors that need to be considered in divided cities and which, upon closer analysis, manifest sensitivity in their own right. Unfortunately, a comprehensive peace policy encompassing all these proposed elements has not yet been created.

The research focuses on the divided city of Nicosia. Although, in theory, policies in Nicosia offer a path to seamless peace-making in the city, in practice, none of them has achieved the desired future. This process is presented in detail in Chapter 5 of this research. However, it can be argued that a multidimensional and interdisciplinary peace-making policy, inclusive of diversity and cognizant of the realities of division and community, is yet to be formulated. Any such policy, Gaffikin and Morrissey’s research indicates, should encompass peace strategies, disengagement, coexistence, democratic dialogues, and positive cross-cultural interactions within the distinct municipalities.

Agency

Collage embodies a state of differences within a composition. While it has evolved as a versatile medium over time, its defining characteristic is the inclusion of fragments, fostering a multiplication of heterogeneity without imposing any conditions. By its very nature, collage converges diverse ideas, opinions, and elements in a free space. In contrast, contested spaces are characterised by an inability of different voices, perspectives, identities, and beliefs to coexist. Despite being spaces where differences attempt to harmonise, these spaces often witness the rejection of multiplicity in favour of homogeneity, resulting in conflict.

This research seeks to understand the concept of collage, flourishing with heterogeneity, with relation to the nature of contested spaces, where multiplicities struggle to coexist. It aims to discover the potential of collage to engage with contested spaces. However,

68 Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Plan. Divid. Cities Collab. Shap. Contested Sp.*, 275–78.

a comprehensive understanding of this research requires an understanding of the fragmentation inherent in collage, and this fragmentation is explained through the concept of agency. Recognising collage's agency is pivotal for grasping the intricacies of this research and realising the potential inherent in collage. To elucidate the potential of collage as a research practice in contested spaces, this section introduces the theoretical framework of 'agency'. Explaining this notion of agency is important to understanding the potential of collage in contested spaces. This concept will be further elaborated in the second part of this research, in which I delve into my own collage-making process, further enriching our understanding of how collage can engage with contested spaces.

The relationship between the fragments in a collage, and the composition created by these fragments, can be defined as 'fragmentation'. However, it is important to clarify that this state of fragmentation does not represent the fragmentation of a pre-existing whole. Instead, it signifies the state of fragments coexisting together. Collage rejects a predefined system of meaning. Instead, it embraces a system of meaning constructed based on the viewer's participation. In some cases, even the collagist may forget where the fragments came from or what they originally meant.⁶⁹ Thus, it can be said that the focus of a collage is on the composition of its fragments, not on the context of the fragments themselves. As a result, it focuses less on definitiveness of interpretation, or the specific qualities of the fragments within a given context, and more on the juxtaposition of fragments to engage the viewer in actively participating and interacting with the gaps in meaning. This dynamic interplay is shaped by multiple dimensions: the fragments' relationship with their image, their interrelationships, and the interpretation of the viewer.

As this chapter has shown, although collage has long been associated with art, provocation, and abstraction, its particular strength lies in its ability to shape and construct perception actively. In this sense, the function of collage is not merely to reflect the reality of fragments but rather to transform them by reconfiguring fragments. While there are countless examples of authoritarian, simplistic, contemplative and imaginative acts of collage, each with varying effects on individuals and societies, for this research, I focus on the relationship between fragments and their connection with the viewer. These relations situate collage as a collective enabling enterprise, an inquiry that both reveals and realises hidden potential. Therefore, in describing the 'agency' of collage in this chapter, I do not mean to advocate for radical interpretation or control of meaning. Instead, it is to explain the ways in which collage-making can liberate potential, enrich experiences, and broaden perceptions.

Agency, on the other hand, is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been widely discussed and debated in a range of disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies.⁷⁰ In the book *Diasporic Agencies* by Nishat Awan, the term takes on significance as it delves into how architecture and urban design respond to

69 Nils-Ole Lund, *Collage Architecture* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1990), 10.

70 James Corner, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention", in *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation*, 2011.

the consequences of increased migration.⁷¹ Awan emphasises the ways individuals and communities in diasporic settings act or have the capacity to act amidst displacement, migration, and social upheaval. In the context of Awan's work in *Spatial Agency*, there is a distinct presentation of an alternative perspective on the production of buildings and space.⁷² Spatial agencies advocate for a more expansive field of opportunities, challenging architecture's traditional focus on the look and making of buildings. It promotes a collaborative approach, challenging the conventional figure of the architect as an individual hero, where agents act with and on behalf of others.⁷³

Expanding on this perspective, the book *Agency Working with Uncertain Architectures* scrutinises the role of agency in designing built environments, emphasising the inherent uncertainty and complexity within architecture.⁷⁴ It notes that architects and designers navigate diverse actors, interests, and constraints, necessitating a nuanced understanding of agency to effect successful change.⁷⁵ While the term 'agency' is increasingly prevalent in academic writing, its meaning may differ from common usage. Although the term is often used to describe the human capacity to act, the everyday definition involves acting on behalf of others.⁷⁶ Thus, clarifying this term becomes important for academic studies employing it. In the context of this research, the term 'agency' represents the capacity of collage fragments to act, both in relation to each other and to the individual. This exploration aims to contribute to a profound understanding of the transformative potential inherent in both agency and collage within the realms of architecture, urban design, and social dynamics.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of 'assemblage' can help to provide an understanding of the concept of 'agency' through collage.⁷⁷ The concept of 'assemblage' represents a complex network of relationships between different elements, including materials, contents, territories, ideas, and systems, similar to that of a collage. Assemblages are created when a number of forces converge, which can be initiated and facilitated by human and non-human agents or arise from a self-organising system. However, they are brought together in a particular way that creates a new emergent entity with its own unique characteristics and tendencies. This notion of assemblages applies to all structures, from individual behavioural patterns to the institutional organisation to the functioning of basic components. They evolve from the assembly of disparate fragments into a productive entity that can be temporarily diagrammed and often has the capacity

71 Nishat Awan, *Diasporic Agencies: Mapping the City Otherwise*, *Diasporic Agencies: Mapping the City Otherwise*, 2017.

72 Nishat Awan, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

73 Awan.

74 Florian Kossak et al., "Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures", in *Agency: Working With Uncertain Architectures*, 2009.

75 Kossak et al.

76 Laura M Ahearn, "Agency", *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9, no. 1–2 (1999): 12–15.

77 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004).

to generate an agencing quality.⁷⁸

As an assemblage, collage derives its agency from its multifaceted character, which allows for diverse interpretations and re-interpretations. Its potency lies not in the reproduction or imposition of preconceived meanings but rather in its capacity to uncover previously unseen or unimagined realities, even within exhausted grounds, through simple fragments. Collage, therefore, unfolds new potentials, remaking images with each iteration and generating diverse consequences. However, the nature of this repetition and productive output varies depending on various factors, including the creator of the collage, the fragments used in its construction, the relationship between these fragments, and the viewer or interpreter of the collage. This active relationship is explained in this research as the multifaceted character of fragments as the agents of collage.

The fragments

The fragment, as an object within the composition, remains the central metaphor for collage. The fragments of collage operate social, political, and aesthetic transformation in a composition. Replacing it with a different conception that regards the fragments as an 'agency' provides an opportunity to examine the metaphorical, theoretical and practical impact of fragments on a collaged image both as a metaphor for epistemology and as a practice. In other words, it is a complex, an assemblage, cooperation between smaller symbiotic wholes all implicated to a greater or lesser extent with larger bodies, presenting a world that can be expressed a single voice of being can be expressed in multitudinous ways.

The fragment can be simultaneously more abstract and concrete than its representation and may not only be concerned with compositions. It can be more abstract by suggesting that intuition and a virtual understanding of power hidden in the making process are more valuable than reductive and deterministic or linguistic analogies. It disregards the meanings conveyed by the image from which it is taken or by the image it represents. On the other hand, the fragment can also assume greater concreteness by insisting on specific and precise interactions with other fragments in order to generate intelligibility, either in itself, in relation to the original image, or within the larger composition that it occupies. It can be explained as demands that the fragment be open to being affected and to *affect*.⁷⁹

78 Graham Livesey, "Agency, Assemblages and Ecologies of The Contemporary City", in *Agency: Working With Uncertain Architectures*, ed. Florian Kossak et al. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 114–24.

79 These terms were borrowed from Deleuze, who used these terms to describe the pre-personal forces that shape our emotional experiences and challenge traditional notions of the self and subjectivity. According to his definition - AFFECTIONS, AFFECTS. - I. The affections (*affectio*) are the modes themselves. The modes are the affections of substance or of its attributes (*Ethics*, I, 2 5 . cor.; I, 30, dem.). These affections are necessarily active [...]. 2. At a second level, the affections designate that which happens to the mode, the modifications of the mode, the effects of other modes on it. These affections are, therefore, images or corporeal traces first of all (*Ethics*, II, post. 5; II, 1 7 , schol. ; III, post. 2); and their ideas involve both the nature of the affected body and that of the affecting external body (II, 1 6) . [...] 3 . But these image affections or ideas form a certain state (*constitutio*) of the affected body and mind, which implies more or less perfection than the preceding state. Therefore, from one state to another, from one image or idea to another, there are transitions, passages that are experienced, durations through which we pass to a greater or a lesser perfection. Furthermore, these states, these affections, images or ideas are not separable from the duration that attaches them to the preceding state and makes them tend towards the next state. These continual durations or variations of perfection are called "affects", or feelings (*affectus*). In Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 48–49.

The agency of a fragment as an affect pertains to its actions rather than the categorisation of *what it is*.⁸⁰ It questions the composition of the fragment and explores how it can be perceived, rather than the image itself. This perspective offers alternative possibilities that challenge the dialectic relationship between fragments, viewers, and collagists, creating awareness of new opportunities for interpretation. It acknowledges that one cannot comprehend the meaning of the fragment without being immersed in it or without accepting the traditional notion that it is necessary to step outside of it. Deleuze notes that comprehending an idea within its context differs from mere representation. Through dramatisation, the Idea is incarnated or actualised; it differentiates itself. The idea's logical value is not straightforward and clear but rather distinctly obscure.

Deleuze posits that the relationship between objects constitutes a reality that he refers to as a virtual realm of *affects*. This dynamic world of affects encompasses the states and affections between objects. *An affect* is characterised as an encounter between bodies, the relationship between a subject and an object, which is entirely real to Deleuze, despite being virtual. When two fragments encounter each other, an affect is triggered in at least one of them, and without this *affect*, one cannot accurately say that there was an encounter. This *affect* triggers the production of a thought, which represents the existence of agency in the collage.

The representation of fragments or collages in translation is often perceived as limited; however, this perspective only scratches the surface of its full potential. In fact, collaged fragments possess an intricate depth that extends beyond the mere translation of codes. These fragments encompass entire assemblages of expression that are composed of both form and content. The interplay of fragmentary relations and the composition of affective capacities define these assemblages and ultimately shape the perception of the collage. This suggests that the separation between subject and object has begun, leading to something novel. The fragments, colours, and lines comprising the collage engage in a dialogue. The signifier and the signified are separated, liberating the signifier and resulting in unexpected outcomes. The fragments are analysed and composed, bringing the privileged relationship between the moment it represents and the moment and space it occupies to the forefront. In a free environment, this relationship extends until it provides meaning to its viewer, in which its own image and the thing it signifies are separated. Therefore, it is the process by which the objective is exposed, simultaneously independent of its own moment, the moment it represents, or the moment in which it is present. The composition remains concealed yet expressive in its presentation and it asks for the agency of fragments to be understood.

The individual

An alternative approach to understanding agency in the realm of collage involves acknowledging the agency of the individual as both a collagist and a viewer or a collage reader. The process of collage-making recognises the creative reality of existence

80 Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974* (New York; London: Semiotext(e), 2004), 94. In the book, Deleuze discuss the idea that asking "What is this?" may not be the best way to discover the essence or the idea of something.

by engaging with its dynamic aspects. Even if the final image removes the temporal relationship between moments or states of existence as convenient illusions, the process of collage-making cannot be ignored. The collagist has a role in deciding and posing the pieces during the process of making a collage. In other words, the collagist is responsible for all aspects of the collage-making process but has no direct analogy to this process, serving only as a decision-maker and constructor. Concomitantly, what is collaged by the process is not directly or simply determined by the process itself. It is the viewer who determines the meaning of the collage or, more broadly, who gives it meaning. The interpretation of collaged images is made meaningful based on the viewer's ability to imagine. Therefore, the relationship between the collage and the collagist, as well as between the collage and its viewer, is an affective or embodied one - because they exist only to the extent that they affect and are affected by the collage. This research thus recognises the agency of individuals as both collagists and viewers.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice is important here too. It emphasises the interaction between the individual and her social context when the individual is considered to have agency. Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* emphasises how individual agency is shaped by social structures and institutions.⁸¹ He argues that individuals are not completely free agents but instead are constrained by the social structures and institutions in which they operate. These structures shape individual habitus, or a set of dispositions and behaviours, learned through socialisation. In the context of collage making, this may, therefore, mean considering how the individual agency of the collagist is shaped by their background, education and social context. Likewise, in the context of making sense of and perceiving a collage, it is also centred on questioning the viewer's individuality. Thus, the collagist and the viewer are both agencies in terms of their individuality, and this influences the process of making the collage and the way in which it is understood and interpreted. Therefore, there is no specific description or explanation of collaged images, but it is shaped by both the creator and the viewer, as with any work of art or architecture. As a result, understanding collage as a research practice requires an understanding of the agency not only of the fragments of the collaged image but also of the agency of these fragments in relation to themselves and each other, and the agency of the individual as collagist and viewer.

This concept is also important for the understanding of this research. In the context of this research, the collages produced in contested spaces in relation to this creative practice are interpreted firstly by appealing to the agency of the creator and then by recognising the creator, me, as the first viewer, and appealing to the agency of the viewer. However, this concept questions the extent to which it is acceptable to use collage as a method of research if the agency of the fragments is variable. This research, on the other hand, explores exploring the processes and possibilities of collage rather than examining its meaning. It is concerned with the act of making collage as a creative method more than the finished product itself. Through these experimental enquiries, I offer that collage

81 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

can create new and productive forms of creative research in contested spaces. Therefore, I do not focus on the invention of new forms of collage but on their thought-provoking and transformative effect, positioning myself in the place of the first viewer to analyse the process of making.

Collage, Contested Space and Agency

Studies of the complexities of contested spaces typically require a comprehensive approach that spans multiple disciplines and dimensions. Contested spaces have their own realities. They require the examination of debated focal points from diverse perspectives, the understanding of the spectrum of individuals affected by the discourses, and the careful scrutiny of problems. A holistic appreciation of these realities is important to achieving desired future that works toward peace. However, this kind of approach is challenging, to say the least. Working in such a context requires recognising limitations or adopting alternative strategies to overcome them.

Collage suggests a free world. It works without established rules or boundaries and has evolved, over its history, into a multifaceted and interdisciplinary mode of operation connecting art and architecture. Examining the historical evolution of collage reveals its versatile roles in global history, assuming roles in communication, discourse, design, critical thinking, understanding, and interpretation. Moreover, its fragmented nature empowers it to transcend rigid confines such as those of structured planning. Therefore, when contemplating the application of collage in contested spaces, there is potential to acknowledge the realities of such spaces while concurrently defying their restrictions. Thus, this research explores collage as an alternative way of working in contested spaces.

The next chapter brings together these ideas in relation to a project that Lebbeus Woods designed for Sarajevo, which was heavily damaged in the Siege of Sarajevo during the Bosnia-Herzegovina War of 1992-1996. The Sarajevo Project consists of conceptual architectural drawings and renderings that propose an alternative approach to radical and transformative interventions in the war-damaged urban landscape.

By embracing a methodology rooted in collage, assemblage, and fragmentary thinking, Woods creates narratives that challenge conventional perspectives of urban planning, architectural paradigms, and social structuring for a city grappling with the aftermath of warfare. The narratives presented through Woods' visual scenarios, a product of his creative practice, epitomise how creative methods can respond to the intricate realities of contested spaces. Examining Woods' Sarajevo Project opens up an understanding of how alternative perspectives can be effectively applied in contested environments. Additionally, this study offers insights into the creative process of collage-making undertaken for this thesis.

Chapter 2

A Case of Sarajevo and Woods' Sarajevo Project

This chapter focuses on Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project. Woods' architectural approach, and, his use of montage, collage, and assemblage are particularly relevant to the research focusing on the potential of collage in contested spaces. Following Woods' project opens up a theoretical and creative ground for my own collage practice in the concept of Nicosia.

During the siege of Sarajevo, artists and architects became directly engaged with the conflict. They responded to war by adapting their creative practices to address both the city's destruction and the assimilation of traumatic memories. This response materialised in diverse artistic practices during the conflict. Lebbeus Woods, a theoretician-architect and visionary artist, contributed a distinctive project focused on revitalising the war-damaged city, his "Sarajevo Project". This work provides insights into how architecture can create transformational power in relation to conflict. Woods employs a unique design language that explores the complex relationship between transformation, architecture and society in settings marked by conflict or chaos. This project serves as an exemplary case study, illustrating the interplay between architectural ways of thinking, creative practice and contested contexts.

The significance of the Sarajevo case study for this research is threefold. Firstly, it demonstrates how creative practices can challenge destruction and assimilation in contested spaces. Secondly, Woods introduces an unconventional architectural perspective, breaking established norms and fostering fresh thinking about architectural responses to contested spaces. His architecture transcends traditional confines, creating narratives that extend beyond physical spaces. Thirdly, this exploration is important in terms of design methodology and presentation. Woods employs drawings, visuals, and sequential imagery to seamlessly integrate concepts and designs, providing a foundation for shaping my own research approach.

This chapter is structured into three parts. The initial section provides an overview of the siege of Sarajevo, discussing projects by selected artists and architects. It outlines the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, detailing the siege itself. It notes the coinage of 'urbicide,' the Warchitecture project against it, and the works created. The subsequent section delves into Woods' architectural philosophy regarding the Sarajevo Project. Within this project, Woods contends that art and architecture offer alternative perspectives that transcend violence and destruction, providing a unique lens for the city's residents. The section scrutinises the concepts and metaphors that Woods formulated in response to the siege, offering insights into the city's devastation for local and global audiences. Central to this analysis is examining how artistic discourses, intertwined in cities undergoing drastic political and social transformations, provide fresh ways of perceiving a contested city's political, social, and cultural fabric.

The final part of the chapter delves into Woods' visual representation methods for the "Sarajevo project", exploring his engagement with storytelling, image creation, and architectural imagination. This examination underscores architects' transformative role when they step beyond conventional working environments. To establish a foundation

for my experimental practice, I analyse Woods' Sarajevo drawings from a collagist perspective, reflecting on emerging insights into the intricate relationship between art and architectural practice within contested spaces.

The case of Sarajevo

This section focuses on artistic and architectural projects produced in response to the Siege of Sarajevo during the Bosnia and Herzegovina War. Understanding these projects holds significance for several reasons here. First, it exemplifies innovative and non-traditional approaches to working within contested spaces. Furthermore, it demonstrates how architecture can address and contribute to conflict-ridden urban environments, and the lives of inhabitants during conflict. This gained further importance due to many art-based endeavours that emerged in Sarajevo during the war. These initiatives aimed to document the war's impact on the urban fabric and re-establish communication within a city where it had been severely curtailed. Woods conveyed architecture's role in this context through his drawings. Lastly, his proposed concepts through his project ignite discussions about the potential and limitations of architectural thinking in responding to destruction, which is important for understanding alternative architectural approaches in contested spaces.

The context of the Bosnia and Herzegovina War

The history of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the story of many wars piled one on top of another. Over a span of 529 years, the region was entwined within the confines of two empires, a kingdom, and a Communist federal republic: the Ottoman Empire (1453-1878); the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1878-1918); the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1918-1929); the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941); the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945); the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1963); the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1992); and finally Bosnia and Herzegovina (from 1992 to the present). This extensive history has transformed Bosnia and Herzegovina into a layered and multi-ethnic state.

In South-eastern Europe, the late twentieth century witnessed violent conflicts that gave rise to social, cultural, and economic predicaments. These conflicts emerged from a complex interplay of factors, such as economic challenges, a leadership vacuum, and an increasing emphasis on ethnic identity.¹ The absence of security mechanisms in the post-Communist era facilitated regional military confrontations and long-term wars. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina had a multi-ethnic fabric that initially suppressed nationalistic fervour, ethnic animosities gradually surfaced and ignited the conflict in the context of the fall of the Soviet Union, the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, and Western ambitions in the Balkans. Political journalist and historian Noel Malcolm succinctly emphasises in his work *Bosnia: A Short History* that the threats to Bosnia emanated "not from internal

¹ Sean Byrne and Neal Carter, "Social Cubism: Six Social Forces Of Ethnopolitical Conflict In Northern Ireland And Quebec", *ILSA Journal of International and Comparative Law* 8, no. 3 (2002).

tensions but from the ambitions of larger powers and neighbouring states”.² Hence, inter-ethnic violence, while ostensibly the main catalyst for the Bosnian and Herzegovina war, was significantly fuelled by external pressures. This rendered Bosnia and Herzegovina’s conflict integral to Yugoslavia’s dissolution.

Following the secession of Slovenia and Croatia from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991, the multi-ethnic Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina – populated primarily by Muslim Bosniaks (44%), Orthodox Serbs (32.5%), and Catholic Croats (17%), with only 6% identifying as “Yugoslav” – held an independence referendum on February 29, 1992.³ The siege was triggered by Bosnia and Herzegovina’s proclamation of independence from the disintegrating state just after the referendum, and it sparked a long war involving the former Yugoslavia.⁴ With this declaration, the regular brutal assaults on the cities by artillery, tanks, and other weaponry began. The siege lasted four years, making it the longest in modern warfare history. Until the peace agreement known as the ‘Dayton Accords’ at the end of 1995, which ended the war in Bosnia and outlined the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, over 200,000 individuals were killed, nearly two million people became displaced, and hundreds of thousands of people were wounded.⁵

As the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo emerged as a central battleground of conflict. The city became ensnared by Bosnian Serb forces, subject to relentless bombardment that severed power, gas, communication lines, and connections to the outside world. Architecturally and culturally significant landmarks, including Gazi Husref Beg’s mosque, Bascarsija mosque, the National Library, the National Museum, and the Oriental Institute, were deliberate targets.⁶ These emblematic edifices and repositories of Bosnian cultural heritage were methodically obliterated. The violence that existed in Sarajevo was not only directed against the city but also at ethnic cleansing through the destruction of specific structures that reflected the city’s cultural legacy.⁷ In other words, the urban environment was tried to be ethnically cleansed in Sarajevo, which later this movement was called ‘urbicide.’

Urbicide

During the Bosnia and Herzegovina War of 1992-95, the term ‘urbicide’ was coined to refer to the massive and deliberate devastation of the urban environment.⁸ To understand Sarajevo’s situation during and after the war, a firm grasp of ‘urbicide’ is significant. The

2 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia : A Short History*, Corrected (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1996), 234.

3 Jasminka Udovicki, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the Former Yugoslavia”, in *The National Question* (Temple University Press, 2009), 280; Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin, 1996).

4 Udovicki, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the Former Yugoslavia”.

5 Malcolm, *Bosnia : A Short History*.

6 Dijana Alic, “Mapping the War: Everyday Survival during the Siege of Sarajevo”, in *Architecture on the Borderline*, ed. Anoma Pieris (London: Routledge, 2019).

7 Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, 2008.

8 Coward.

concept of 'urbicide' does not mean targeting all built environments but means targeting the built environment in its own right for "the killing the urbanity".⁹ According to Andrew Herscher, deeper implications should be sought within the violence represented by this concept. He notes in his essay "Urbicide, Urbanism, and Urban Deconstruction in Kosovo" that the concept which underlies the use of the term 'urbicide' is "a distinction between urban destruction and urbanism: the destruction wreaked during the war was assumed to be fundamentally distinct from the life of cities during peace".¹⁰ Thus, Herscher explains 'urbicide' as a concept of violence employed to establish an oppositional relationship between the heterogeneous, multicultural, and cosmopolitan on the one hand and the ethnic, ethno-nationalist, and tribal on the other.¹¹

Martin Coward follows with Herscher's interpretation of 'urbicide' in his book *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*. He explains its political and conceptual facets. According to Coward, 'urbicide' epitomises politically how "violent regimes such as ethnic nationalism are characterised by the transformation of plurality into homogeneous enclaves".¹² Urbicidal violence conveys the supremacy of a singular identity, focusing not merely on population displacement but on the creation of exclusive enclaves. Conceptually, he points out that "the phenomenon of urbicide entails a contestation of the anthropocentric perspective from which political violence has traditionally been understood".¹³ This suggests that individuals are central to the violence inflicted upon the built environment, for structures serve as spaces in which ideologies are conceived. Therefore, not only are buildings targeted, but individuals, who are constitutive of the built environment, are also targeted. In this manner, this concept of 'urbicide', which emerged during the Yugoslavia war and was particularly intertwined with the siege of Sarajevo, embodies an attraction to build environments, an effort to mask the irreducible diversity and plurality of society and to impose homogeneity. Hence, the core objective of urbicidal violence is to obliterate heterogeneity through the destruction of the built environment, a repository of specific ideologies during wartime.

This research is also a study of understanding the artistic production of architecture in contested spaces, so it is important to comprehend the condition of the city throughout the conflict, as well as the threats to the built environment. Therefore, this section focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina's historical and political periods, attempting to demonstrate how politically tumultuous recent Yugoslav history has been. Moreover, understanding the term 'urbicide', which refers to the elimination of ideological and ethnic diversifications by targeting architecture, also helps the understanding of the situation in Sarajevo during the siege time.

9 Coward, 38.

10 Andrew Herscher, "Urbicide, Urbanism, and Urban Destruction in Kosovo", *Theory & Event* 10, no. 2 (2007).

11 Herscher.

12 Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, 16.

13 Ibid.

Artistic practices during the siege of Sarajevo

Despite the difficult war conditions within Sarajevo and the heavy assault on the built environment, a multitude of artistic productions emerged during the conflict. These encompassed theatrical performances, concerts, exhibitions, film festivals, and cultural events. These unexpected artistic endeavours hold pivotal importance within the history of the siege of Sarajevo. They not only documented the deliberate devastation of the city but also facilitated the reestablishment of the city's communication with the external world. Moreover, they marked the genesis of post-war urban revitalisation. Hence, before examining Woods' contributions during the Bosnian and Herzegovina war, it is valuable to scrutinise the creative outputs of artists and architects within Sarajevo. This focus sheds light on their interactions with art-based modes of expression and their broader relationship with the conflict. Therefore, the following section focuses on a selection of artistic productions from that period.

Although artists with a conflict background have been studied across the world, the situation in Sarajevo presents unique circumstances. These conditions not only blurred the lines between combatants and civilians but also thrust artists into direct involvement in the war's causes and struggles, leaving them with no means of escape.¹⁴ In Sarajevo, artists and architects were active participants in the cause and course of the conflict.¹⁵ Despite enduring sniper fire and bombardments that disrupted every day and cultural life, they maintained an active, productive process, continuing to organise a variety of cultural events, including exhibitions, theatre performances, discussions, concerts, meetings, and film screenings, continued to be organised throughout the conflict.

The core objective of these endeavours was to re-establish a connection with the outside world – a world that the city had been entirely severed from due to communication restrictions. Adapting to the wartime circumstances, artists and architects worked to amplify their voices. Local practitioners reached out to the global community by inviting international counterparts through projects designed to be expressive platforms. However, the war had imposed stringent limitations, sealing off the city's borders. The sole means of access was via United Nations aid planes, transporting essential supplies, and only those possessing UN press credentials were granted direct passage to Sarajevo's airport.¹⁶ Consequently, several international cultural figures, including Lebbeus Woods, Susan Sontag and Paul Lowe, posed as "journalists" to support local artists and intellectuals and document the city's plight. In a city where communication was curtailed, journalism emerged as an unexpected conduit for connection. Under these circumstances, numerous projects revolved around producing publications, which were then shared with the world. One such instance was Woods' project, titled 'War and Architecture,' published in *Pamphlet*

14 Ewa Anna Kumelowski, "The Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle : An Introduction to the History of the Visual Arts Scene of Besieged Sarajevo", *Third Text* 34, no. 3 (2020).

15 Armina Pilav, "Architects in War': Wartime Destruction and Architectural Practice during the Siege of Sarajevo", *Journal of Architecture (London, England)* 25, no. 6 (2020): 697–716.

16 Lebbeus Woods, *Slow Manifesto : Lebbeus Woods Blog*, First edit, 2015, 18.

Architecture 15.¹⁷ Creative undertakings thus evolved into a resonant voice projecting the perspectives of Sarajevo's artists and architects to the global stage. These events and creative endeavours also introduced new ways of observing and documenting the city in war. They generated artefacts rooted in survival experiences and observations, serving as communication tools during the war and later becoming valuable archives of war-related knowledge.

Next, I will examine: *Warchitecture*, a project that encompasses an exhibition, a catalogue magazine issue, and politically oriented international postcards that directly call for intervention and engagement; and the *Sarajevo: Survival Guide*, a document prepared with sarcastic language to aid locals and visitors in navigating the city's changing borders and borderlands, equipping them to survive without transportation, hotels, taxis, phones, food, shops, heating, water, information, and electricity.

Warchitecture

The term 'Warchitecture' was coined specifically to represent Sarajevo. The term, which blurs the conceptual line between "war" and "architecture", is used to describe the catastrophic destruction of architecture between 1992 and 1996.¹⁸ Herscher interprets this term as a means for self-expression for architecture against the war's destructive power. His essay titled 'Warchitectural Theory' notes that the term 'Warchitecture' "provides a tool to critique dominant accounts of wartime destruction, bringing the interpretive protocols of architecture to bear upon that destruction".¹⁹ As a result, this project presents alternative ways of conceptualising violence against architecture, relating it to emerging debates of war, violence, and modernity in and among other disciplines.

Between May 1992 and October 1993, the Bosnia-Herzegovina Association of Architects (DAS-SABIH) chronicled Sarajevo's systematic destruction with photographs, maps, video footage, audio, and written narratives, resulting in the project '*Warchitecture*'.²⁰ This multifarious project focused on the design responses of local and international architects and artists, including Woods, as well as local architects Zoran Doršner, Ivan Štraus, and members of the graphic design group Trio Sarajevo - Bojan and Dalida Hadžihalilović and Leila Mulabegović-Hatt. These artists and architects produced aesthetic and artistic

17 *Pamphlet Architecture* is a renowned series of books in architecture. It aims to promote radical thinking, experimental approaches, and innovative design proposals. Through its collection of thought-provoking booklets, the series challenges established norms, fostering a culture of innovation that encourages architects and designers to push the boundaries of convention. By intertwining visionary graphics with concise prose, it offers a platform for practitioners to present radical proposals that reimagine spatial paradigms, materials, and technologies. This series is a testament to the power of refusing limits and embracing the unexplored, as practitioners like Steven Holl, Lebbeus Woods, Zaha Hadid, Greg Lynn, Michael Sorkin, and Lars Lerup showcase their projects that defy tradition and shape the future of architecture. *Pamphlet Architecture* embodies a legacy of radical thinking, experimentation, and a relentless pursuit of architectural evolution.

18 Andrew Herscher, "Warchitectural Theory", *Journal of Architectural Education*, 2008.

19 Herscher.

20 The *Warchitecture* project was realised by the Association of Architects DAS-SABIH in collaboration with other institutions such as the City Civil Defence-Spatial Unit for Cultural Rescue and Heritage Protection, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Unit for Preservation of Cultural Heritage Protection, and the Sarajevo City Council-Architectural Unit for Preservation of Cultural Legacy and Cultural Heritage.

work to document and present findings of the war-damaged city from their personal, social, and professional perspectives. They used their practices to bring insider perspectives to the siege's impact on the city and its people, in order to share Sarajevo's situation with the rest of the world. Later, these works created during the war led to a major exhibition and catalogue describing Sarajevo's physical and cultural destruction. Moreover, on 16 March 1994, five members of DAS-SABIH escaped from the city under siege with the documentary materials that would become *Warchitecture- Sarajevo: A Wounded City*, a travelling multimedia exhibition illustrating the destruction.²¹ This travelling exhibition found itself in a broader project, and it is discussed here as an example of that artistic way of communication during the siege.

Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo

The 1993 exhibition catalogue *Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo* from DAS-SABIH, in collaboration with Sarajevo's art and heritage institution, documented systematic destruction. [1-3] The catalogue employed architectural techniques of spatialisation and visualisation to showcase the damage incurred. Damage was mapped in terms of architectural spaces of infliction (roof, facade, and direct hits on buildings) and architectural effects (roof damage, partial burning of buildings, entire burning of buildings, and complete destruction of buildings). The targets of this damage were thus turned into a new architectural history of Sarajevo, a history composed in terms of received historical-cultural categories (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, modernist, and contemporary).²²

Beyond its role as a mere architectural record, this survey emerged as a critical undertaking due to its clear data presentation and the systematic organisation of details.²³ The catalogue's incorporation of maps and black-and-white photographs meticulously labelled both public and private structures, achieving a level of precision akin to surgical documentation. The photographs, serving as records of the city's situation, captured the city in distress. In parallel, Susan Sontag's perspective on photography resonates here, emphasising the merging of objectivity and the photographer's viewpoint, as photographs hold an inherent point of view while also being objective records of reality.²⁴ Therefore, the images within the catalogue also acted as evidence of the devastation. By showcasing the altered landscape of Sarajevo, the dossier communicated the reality of destruction to a worldwide audience. These images were not only visual records but also powerful messengers testifying to the photographer's first-hand witness to and documentation of the destruction's extent and scale.

The catalogue operated as an ever-evolving organism, mirroring the ongoing destruction

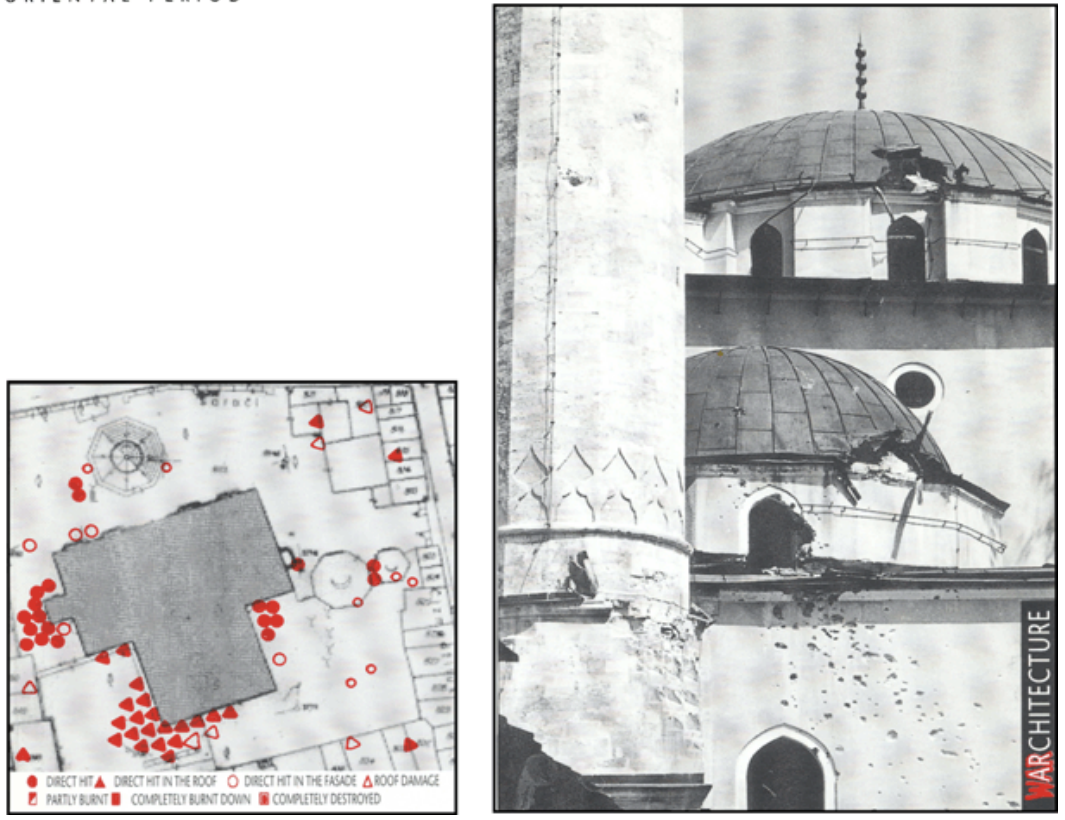
21 Exhibitions, catalogues, the journal project, and related projects were all part of the larger *Warchitecture* project. *The Urbicide Sarajevo* exhibition debuted in Sarajevo in April 1992 and then toured around Europe. In the United States, Rajka Mandi organised the exhibition *Sarajevo: Dream and Reality*, while Midhat Cesovi organised the exhibition *Sarajevo: Wounded City (Urbicide Sarajevo)*. The people associated with Storefront exhibition space in New York, as well as the NIAE and Parsons School of Design, were instrumental in organising and presenting both exhibitions.

22 Herscher, "Warchitectural Theory".

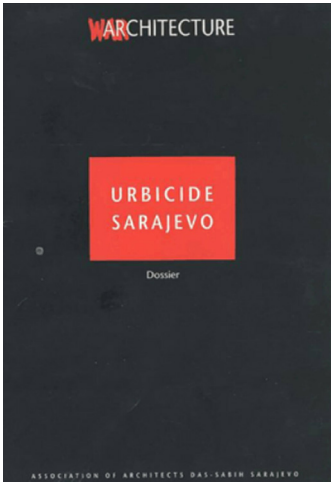
23 Teresa Stoppani, "The Architecture of the Disaster", *Space and Culture*, 2012.

24 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2004), 22–23.

ORIENTAL PERIOD



1 - Destruction of Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque, designed by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994



2- 'Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo', cover of exhibition catalogue.



3 - Map of destruction in Sarajevo's Bazaar, designed by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994

as buildings crumbled and the city's wounds multiplied. Through detailed maps, the catalogue depicted the progression of war. It not only described and documented the city's altered fabric of wounds and emptiness but also unveiled a historical backdrop of what had been erased from the city's landscape. This process illustrated how architecture could be employed as a tool of communication to reveal the city's transformations. Furthermore, the mapping process fulfilled a dual purpose: it served as a representation

of disaster in the “*Urbicide Sarajevo*” catalogue while also constructing an archive that could underpin future strategies. This utilisation of traditional architectural and urban representation methods facilitated the creation of an infrastructure for potential future initiatives.

Sarajevo: Dream and Reality

In 1995, the National Institute for Architectural Education in New York City extended an invitation to the Association of Architects from Sarajevo to shed light on the impact of war on the city’s architecture and creative expressions within the field. This invitation led to the unveiling of two parallel exhibitions: “*Urbicide Sarajevo*” and “*Sarajevo: Dream and Reality*,” showcased at New York’s Storefront for Art and Architecture Gallery and Parsons School of Design. The exhibition displayed 14 projects created by Sarajevo’s students and professionals who responded creatively to the devastation caused by the war. The significance of this exhibition was highlighted by its coverage in various architecture magazines of the time. One such coverage came from a review in the *New York Times* titled ‘Mourning the Gorgeous Mosaic That Was Sarajevo’ by Herbert Muschamp. Muschamp described the challenging wartime circumstances under which these projects emerged, including the lack of basic amenities such as gas, electricity, functioning computers, and paper shortages, as well as the disruption of classes.²⁵

Muschamp referred to the architects of Sarajevo as ‘guardians,’ recognising their role not only as custodians of history but also as guardians of continuity.²⁶ Zoran Doršner’s architectural proposals were specifically highlighted. Doršner’s project titled ‘Destructive Metamorphosis’ of 35,000 apartments into urgent facilities for family survival shelter of 100m² in concentration camp Sarajevo 1993, 1994, and 1995 depicted how the war dramatically altered the urban landscape and domestic spaces. His work visualised the transformation of modernist dwellings into individually customised survival shelters, each accommodating the unique needs of its occupants.²⁷ By reimagining these spaces with an architectural lens, he presented them as models for dwelling during the siege. His proposal encompassed a range of mediums, including texts, journal articles, working sketches, and free-hand overlapped drawings. These drawings provided a socio-spatial narrative of the shifts within residential units from pre-war conditions to wartime realities and also depicted the various civilian adaptations and resources utilised for survival during the siege.²⁸

In his proposal for the “*Sarajevo: Dream and Reality*” exhibition, Doršner defined the theme as “a realistic caricature, a graphic representation of the typical floor plan of a flat from the newer series of social housing in the scale 1:10 with an emphasis on the metamorphosis of the flat’s interior during the war, including the details of wartime design

25 Herbert Muschamp, “Architecture Review; Mourning The Gorgeous Mosaic That Was Sarajevo: Review”, *The New York Times*, 1995.

26 Muschamp.

27 Pilav, “Architects in War’: Wartime Destruction and Architectural Practice during the Siege of Sarajevo”.

28 Armina Pilav, “Collective Documenting of Extreme Urban Transformations: Evidence of Urban Resilience during the War in Sarajevo (1992–1996)”, in *Architecture and Resilience*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 17–31.

for dwelling”.²⁹ His drawings aimed to convey the war’s impact on individuals’ daily lives and their living spaces, highlighting the transformation of homes into survival shelters. The drawings illuminated the myriad ways in which the war affected crucial aspects of life, such as employment, privacy, and independence. Unconventional alterations in spatial planning were showcased, such as the reconfiguration of sandbag protective walls and the repurposing of living rooms for storage. Doršner’s drawings spoke to the power of architecture in adapting to changing circumstances and reshaping spatial expectations. In other words, it was also a two-dimensional interrogation of the everyday life changed by the war and the spaces through architectural drawings. As Muschamp remarked:

*Though occasioned by catastrophe, these two shows are heartening because they highlight a critical role for architects in a changing world. The architect who created these shows are not just designers of new buildings or conservators of old ones. They are catalysts for cultural exchange. They are makers of places, but they are also actors on the world stage. As the Storefront show demonstrates, Sarajevo is a monument to both cultural differences and the breakdown of tolerance. The refusal of these architects to surrender to that breakdown transcends their city’s fate.*³⁰

Greetings from Sarajevo: The Universal Message of Postcards

As part of the broader Warchitecture project during the siege, the graphic design collective Trio produced a series of postcards that vividly portrayed the hardships endured by Sarajevans and the devastation wreaked by the city’s siege. Already renowned for their political posters, award-winning album covers of Yugoslav bands, film posters, and promotional materials, Trio’s reputation quickly expanded as the war commenced.³¹ Possessing a strong visual language, Trio employed it during the war to show their response to the siege of Sarajevo. They employed an alternate postcard format to underscore their message and its intent for wide distribution. Their purpose was to enlighten the global community about the war’s conditions in Sarajevo, and the postcard’s adaptable format facilitated communication beyond the city limits.³² Each postcard bore a message on its reverse: *“This work was conceived in the midst of the constraints of war, without paper, ink, electricity or water. Only goodwill”*.

The important aspect of Trio’s postcards was the creation of images through the manipulation of familiar visuals designed to evoke a “shock” effect. They purposefully reworked images that people all over the world are familiar with in order to capture their attention and illustrate their shared humanity and culture. For instance, the postcard titled “Wake up, Europe!” cleverly mimicked the iconic First World War propaganda poster “Wake up, America!” by incorporating a backdrop of a war-ravaged Sarajevo, urging Europe

29 Pilav.

30 Muschamp, “Architecture Review; Mourning The Gorgeous Mosaic That Was Sarajevo: Review”.

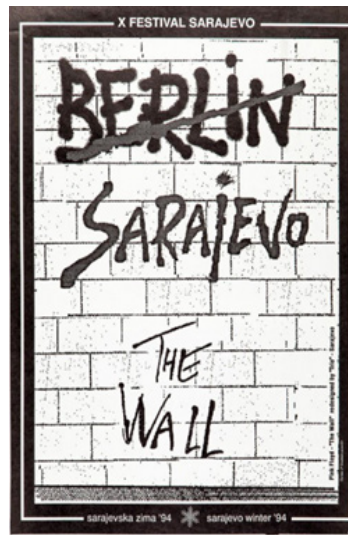
31 Alic, “Mapping the War: Everyday Survival during the Siege of Sarajevo”.

32 Daoud Sarhanhi, Alina Boboc, and David Rohde, *Evil Doesn’t Live Here: Posters From The Bosnian War* (London: Laurance King, 2001).

to awaken from indifference and scrutinise its lack of support for Bosnians. Similarly, their rendition of Andy Warhol's iconic 1962 pop art piece "Campbell's Soup Cans" substituted "Sarajevo's condensed" instead of "Campbell's condensed," embellishing the image with bullet holes to signify destruction. Trio's alteration of the Pink Floyd album cover for "The Wall" involved striking out "Berlin" and appending "Sarajevo," powerfully illustrating the metaphorical barriers that separated Bosnians from each other and the world, accentuating the impact of political and ethnic divisions. [4-6]



4 - *Sarajevo's condensed*, designed by Trio Sarajevo, 1994



5 - *The Wall*, designed by Trio Sarajevo, 1994



6 - *Wake up, Europe!*, designed by Trio Sarajevo, 1994

Trio adeptly harnessed the potential of visual communication during times of scarcity and conflict. The postcard format allowed Trio Sarajevo to communicate its message to a global audience amidst the chaos of war. Employing familiar imagery, they conveyed a potent message that resonated clearly. By manipulating well-known images, these works decried the injustices of war and garnered international attention. Significantly, these cultural references, particularly the use of pop art, established a shared language between sender and recipient - an inherent universality rooted in visual expression.³³ Furthermore, the postcards galvanised a response from numerous international artists, encompassing theatre directors, actors, musicians, and designers. These figures heeded the call, journeying to Sarajevo and contributing their talents and voices to the local community. Prominent figures like Susan Sontag, Bernard Henri Levy, and Annie Leibovitz contributed their creative perspectives to the postcard designs.³⁴ As a result, these postcards not only amplified their voices and protested against the war but also served to re-establish a mutual means of communication with the broader world.

Sarajevo: Survival Guide

The Sarajevo Survival Guide was a "Michelin-style guidebook" prepared by FAMA between

³³ Alic', "Mapping the War: Everyday Survival during the Siege of Sarajevo".

³⁴ Leila Hatt-Mulabegovic, "Sarajevo," *Graphis* 50, no. 292 (1994): 72.

1992 and 1993.³⁵ This guidebook addressed the fundamental needs of individuals striving to endure the daily challenges of this tumultuous period. It offered a compendium of “tips, documents, stories, and interviews in order to archive possibilities of survival in an urban area after disasters caused by humans or nature”.³⁶ However, different from a standard guidebook, it used a tone that was both cautious and ironic. It aimed to heighten awareness about the struggle for survival, weaving connections between the ravages of war and life lessons, juxtaposing the mundane with the extraordinary, all conveyed in a tongue-in-cheek style.

The survival guide adopted a distinctive perspective, framing discussions on everyday life during the siege in Sarajevo to reshape citizens’ engagement with their city. On the cover, for example, it sported an attention-grabbing advertisement: “GREETINGS FROM SUNNY SARAJEVO! Where to Stay Where to Dine Shopping Getting Around Town Cultural Activities Water, Electricity, and Other Practical Tips”. Accompanying this text was a photograph of a young boy laden with water bottles, his expression of perplexity and near-desperation - a poignant representation of the besieged children. The cover’s text continued in sarcastic language: “Sarajevo is a unique city on the planet! Sarajevo lives the post-cataclysm! Sarajevo is science fiction! Sarajevo makes Mad Max 5 possible! Sarajevo is the end of the 21st century! Sarajevo is the city of the future! Sarajevo builds a new civilisation on the ruins of the old one! Sarajevo teaches! Sarajevo gives you instructions on how to survive!”.³⁷

While this presentation parodied any number of tourist guidebooks with dedicated chapters such as “Climate”, “Sarajevo by Night”, “Entertainment and Accommodation”, “Cultural Guide”, “Tips”, and “History”, it was also a documentary account of how the city sustained itself through unimaginable physical and psychological tortures.³⁸ On the other hand, the visuals created a notable exception to enhance the sensation of dread that is not exhibited despite the pure realism offered by these images. In other words, the images aided the guide’s language in patches to offer sensations that are difficult to express in words, in keeping with the presentation’s overall tone. Such as a splash of frozen brilliant crimson on the snow on the page, as if a bucket of paint has been flung, grabbing the reader’s attention.

As a result, the Sarajevo Survival Guide was a project that aimed to demonstrate the impossibility of stopping the daily life of an individual through military siege and control and to emphasise the environmental and social conditions as elements that connect Sarajevo to the rest of the world. It analysed local conditions and focused on the potential

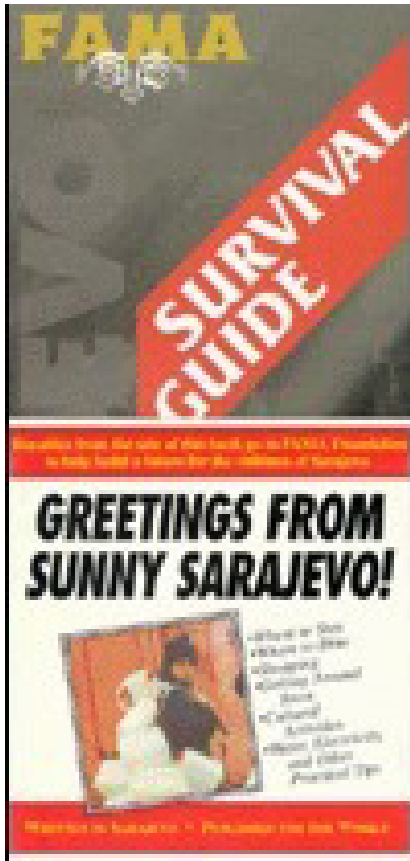
35 FAMA was an independent production company founded in the pre-war period that worked primarily in audio and video media. The Sarajevo Survival Guide was published by this organisation. Miroslav Prstojević (text), Željko Puljić (photos), Nenad Dogan (design), Maja Razović (editor), Aleksandra Wagner (editor and translator), and Ellen-Elias Bursać (translator) contributed to the Sarajevo Survival Guide. Today, FAMA is registered as FAMA International, and FAMA Collection represents a virtual bank of knowledge dedicated to the Siege of Sarajevo 1992–1996.

36 “Sarajevo Survival Guide”, FAMA Collection, 1993.

37 FAMA, *Sarajevo Survival Guide* (Sarajevo: Workman Publishing, 1994).

38 Wen Stephenson, “FAMA, ‘Sarajevo Survival Guide’ (Book Review)”, *Chicago Review* 40, no. 4 (1994): 93.

of the city in terms of the limits created by the siege. Additionally, it was also an example of how the human mind and nature can find creative solutions to severe crises and total destruction. FAMA also supported that this project “originated from the need to teach the world about the phenomena of siege and survival, and the incredible potential of human nature which could oppose the terrible four-year destruction with creation, intelligence, and work as a law of survival”.³⁹ In this light, this project not only recorded or documented what happened in the city during the siege but also drew attention and created public opinion through its creative practice.



7 - The Sarajevo Survival Guide, designed by FAMA, 1994



8 - The image used in the Sarajevo Survival Guide

Creative practices during the conflict

Due to artists' and architects' direct engagement with conflict, the siege of Sarajevo can be seen as a unique case. They sought to reclaim their surroundings through their creations, challenging the destruction of the city and the assimilation of traumatic memories. This creative impulse contrasts with the deliberate targeting of specific cultural and religious buildings by the Army of the Bosnian Serb Republic, which aimed to eradicate specific ideologies in Sarajevo through 'urbicide'. The destruction of cultural symbols resonates with the erasure of the city's history of coexistence and collective memory, as architect and urbanist Dolores Hayden notes in *The Power of Place*: "When the urban landscape is

³⁹ "Sarajevo Survival Guide".

battered, important collective memories are destroyed".⁴⁰ The effort to protect collective memory and the city's identity from this direct assault on destruction has, therefore, resonated with international and local artists in Sarajevo, prompting them to engage with the situation they face through their creative practice.

In this chapter, the representation of the artefacts produced during the four-year siege of Sarajevo was limited, but it attempted to illustrate this situation by exploring specific works and exhibitions. The concept of 'Warchitecture', which combines the terms 'war' and 'architecture', exemplified the combination of creativity and conflict. *The Urbicide Sarajevo* produced within this project not only documented the systematic destruction of Sarajevo's architecture but also went beyond traditional architectural interpretations by incorporating aesthetic and artistic approaches. *Sarajevo: Dream and Reality* went beyond the local context of architecture, challenging dominant narratives and providing awareness about the devastating impact of war on spatial organisations. *Greetings From Sarajevo* succeeded in sending an open message to the world with its postcards, enabling the re-establishment of broken communication during the siege. *Sarajevo: A Survival Guide*, on the other hand, illustrated the resourcefulness of the city's inhabitants in grappling with adversity, employing a unique vernacular and accompanying visuals to articulate the wartime conditions to readers, ultimately prompting them to interrogate this lamentable reality.

During the siege of Sarajevo, it is clear that the creative production of both local and international artists and architects was deeply influenced by the political and military background of the period. Creative practice emerged as both a purpose in itself and a means to an end. While different practices served as a documentation of people's experiences and a reflection of practitioners' responses to the conflict, the conditions of war forced practitioners to abandon traditional methods and seek alternative ways of working, seeing and representing their ideologies. Architects and artists have adapted their expertise to the conditions of war, challenging its constraints and developing an approach through which they can channel their creative resistance to the prevailing violence. In other words, the conflict has acted as a catalyst for creative practitioners to explore new and experimental approaches, making their practice a vehicle for diversified forms of production. Their practice has thus become an alternative way of recording the conflict and its traces in the city, denouncing it, and sharing these provocations with the outside world and communicating them. The next section of this chapter analyses Wood's Sarajevo project in detail, focusing on adapting architecture to work in contested spaces.

40 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place : Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 9.

Lebbeus Woods and his Sarajevo Project

Lebbeus Woods' texts, such as *Slow Manifesto: Lebbeus Woods Blog*,⁴¹ *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*,⁴² *Radical Reconstruction*,⁴³ and *War and Architecture*,⁴⁴ invite us to imagine alternative environments where earth and sky, destroyed and built, space and non-space have lost their traditional meanings. We are asked to imagine other ways of inhabiting in worlds more different to our own than the one we now inhabit. Woods calls for the requalification of architectural norms for the built environment, emerging within spaces influenced by unpredictable dynamics like global economic turbulence, outbreaks of conflict, disruptions of established orders, and unforeseen shifts in political power. He contends that customary architectural concepts are limiting and inadequate in the face of contemporary society's complex and rapid evolution, especially in the context of war. Thus, he argues that architecture needs to break from established norms and adopt an architectural strategy that shapes alternative habitats in response to these changes.

For Woods, architecture transcends technical boundaries; it becomes a political and social tool that engages with and challenges prevailing structural paradigms.⁴⁵ Using architecture as a tool, Woods encourages dialogue with established power structures and promotes addressing issues of conflict, war, and societal transformation architecturally through his designs. As a result, Woods invites us to imagine alternative ways of living by re-evaluating architectural norms in response to the traditional models' inadequacy in addressing today's complexities. Through architecture, he engages with society's ever-shifting nature, questions conventions, and proposes innovative solutions that navigate the unpredictable and transformative forces shaping our environment.

Woods distinguishes the production of knowledge based on architectural imagination from the production of construction projects. Architecture, for him, encompasses not all constructed edifices but rather those that encapsulate a profound understanding and wisdom uniquely bestowed by architects.⁴⁶ Therefore, any architectural creation devoid of "conscious ideation concerning human inhabitation and its meaning" falls short of possessing architectural value in Woods' discernment.⁴⁷ He posits that architecture operates as a way of knowing and creativity. However, considering architecture as a form of knowledge production or transmission does not demand the materialisation of a definitive "end-product".⁴⁸ Instead, these constructs are envisaged as "the matrix of ideas, concepts, and designs", endowed with the capacity to engage with the complexities of the human condition intimately. Woods' conception depicts an experimental process

41 Woods, *Slow Manifesto : Lebbeus Woods Blog*.

42 Lebbeus Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act* (London: Academy Press, 1992).

43 Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997).

44 Lebbeus Woods, "War and Architecture", in *Pamphlet Architecture 15* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).

45 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*.

46 Lebbeus Woods, "Open Question", Lebbeus Woods (blog), 2009.

47 Woods.

48 Woods. *Ibid.*

interwoven with various agents, elaborated through paper-based scenarios that explore possibilities that prompt the emergence of “new ways of moving or resting space, new and always transforming relationships between both people and things”.⁴⁹ These explorations are situated within the “critical edges of urban life” and within a culture “maintained at the expense of creativity”.⁵⁰ Woods’ oeuvre, which he regards as a manifestation of knowledge concerning the experimental dwelling,⁵¹ is here referred to as ‘other ways of doing architecture,’ supporting the research question of this study by pointing to the potential inherent within alternative ways of thinking and doing to effect transformative change in contested spaces.

Woods’ architecture as a catalyst for transformation

Woods’ architecture is a language of inquiry. Through his language, he invites us to respond to dreams of freedom, experience, and escape from the rule of spaces that threaten to imprison us in contested spaces. He achieves this through cycles of change and creativity within socially, culturally, and politically contested contexts, and his architecture prompts contemplation of the enigmatic and uncertain interplay of space, a factor integral to shaping human existence, habitation, and construction. Therefore, his language served as an instrument to make a transformation in the social fabric and the political fabric of contested spaces; thus, architecture became a catalyst for his proposals. As noted in his work *Anarchitecture*, “Architecture is a political act, by nature. It has to do with the relationships between people and how they decide to change their conditions of living”.⁵² Therefore, it can be said that his architecture rejects authoritative forces, instead embracing the reconfiguration of existence’s circumstances.

However, his architectural way of thinking in contested spaces embraces change, not as a revolution, but as a catalyst for supportive stances and potential revolutions. It addresses both the individual and the balanced, ongoing rapport among members of society. Within his approach, architecture becomes an agent that directly challenges hierarchical systems, functioning as a tool for his confrontation against the socio-political order’s governing principles. In his conversation with Raimund Abraham, Woods notes that:

*In places where change creates a crisis, there’s a strong desire to return things to normal, by restoring things to the way they were - but it’s not always possible or desirable because the crisis has changed conditions, relationships. In those cases, it’s best to create something new, including architecture. The challenge I’ve taken up is how can architecture - the design of space - aid or become instrumental in innovating, inventing, new ways of inhabiting space.*⁵³

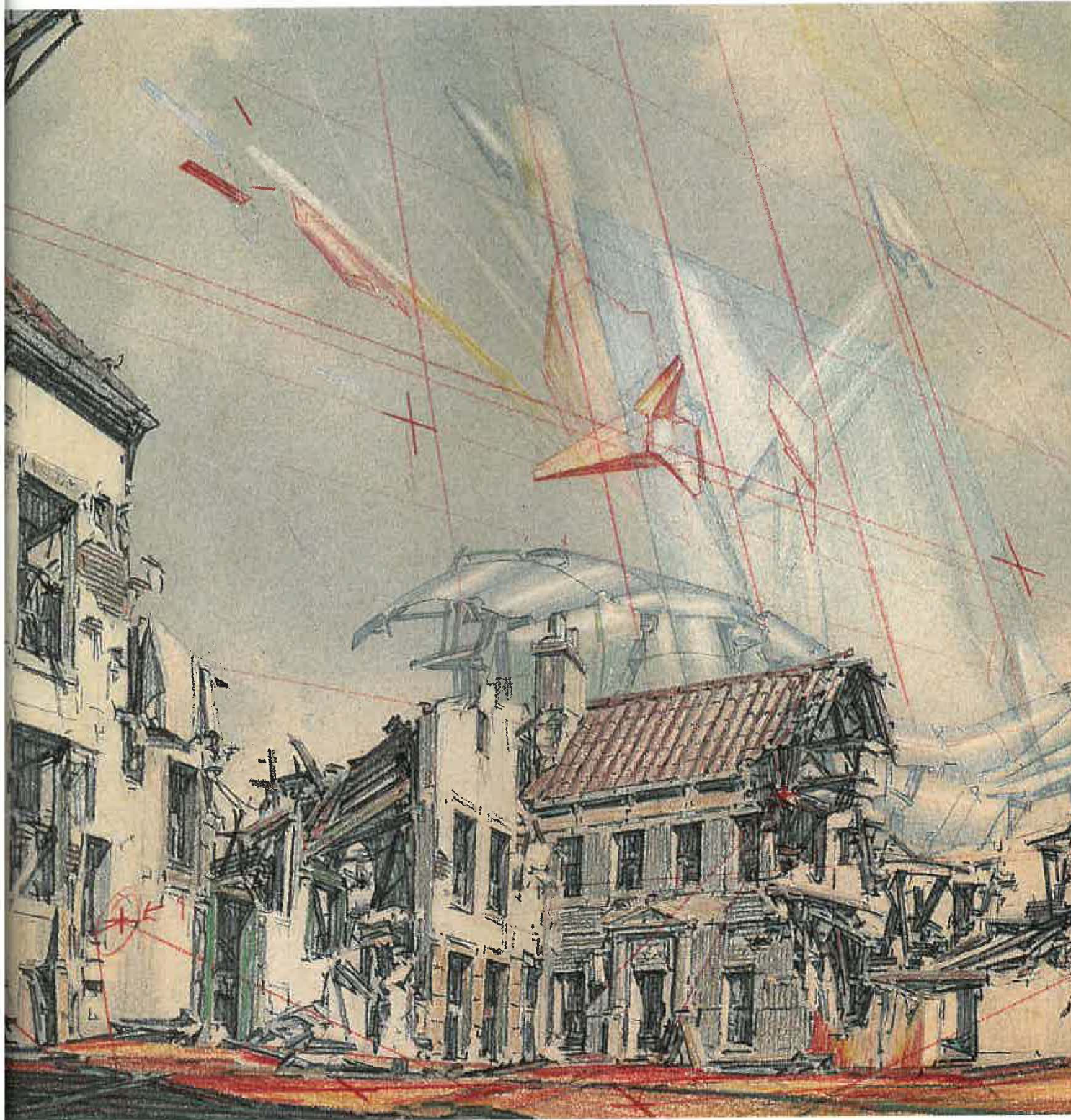
49 Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 13.

50 Woods, 13.

51 Ibid.

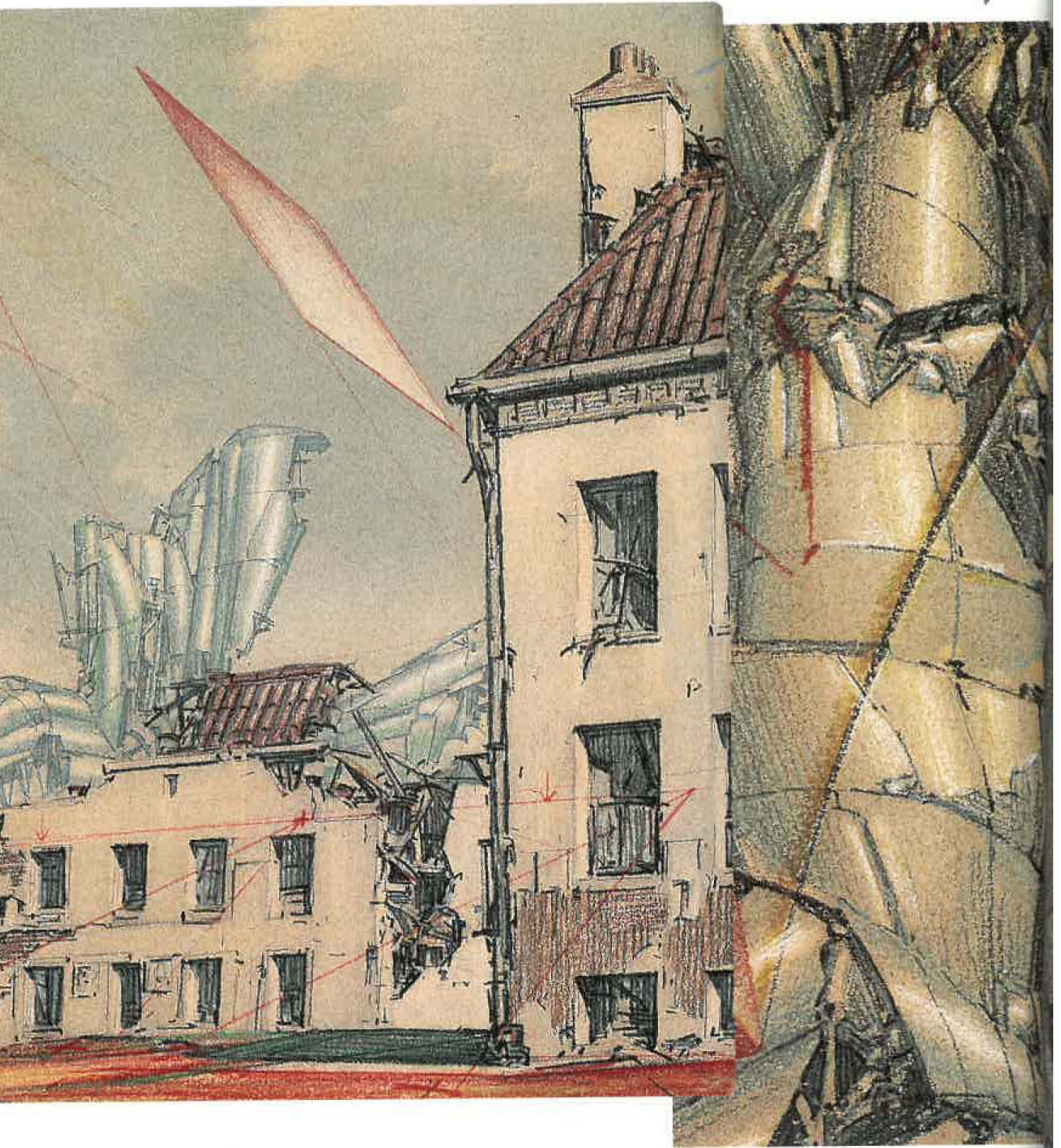
52 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*.

53 Lebbeus Woods, “ANTI-Journey to Architecture: Day 5 Discussion”, Lebbeus Woods (blog), 2011.



[Handwritten text, possibly a signature or notes, in black ink.]

① 5706



9 - The Sarajevo Project, No.1, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

This inquiry compels us to question prevailing assumptions about space within contested spaces, prompting profound reflections on what constitutes space of living. This questioning is evident in his works such as “Berlin Free-Zone” (1990), “Zagreb Free-Zone” (1991), “War and Architecture Series” (1992-93), and “Sarajevo Project” (1994). In each project, he has developed a way of thinking with the help of architecture that can help to invent and innovate alternative ways of living in space to create a broader understanding of living in spaces affected by different types of forces. In other words, by creating an experimental understanding of architecture in crisis-affected societies, he has shown that an alternative way of living in space is possible, which supports an alternative way of working in the contested spaces that are the subject of this research. To comprehend his thinking within contested spaces, the next section focuses on his Sarajevo Project.

Woods’s project for Sarajevo was published in *Pamphlet Architecture 15*, titled ‘War and Architecture’.⁵⁴ Within this pamphlet, he introduced architectural concepts aimed at revitalising the war-damaged city. These concepts provide suggestions for engaging with the devastated built environment while elucidating the process of its reconstruction. However, Woods clarified that his objective was not solely architectural but rather to foster a cognitive approach that employs architecture as a tool to see the future potentials of the contested spaces of a war-damaged city. He expounded on this objective in his blog, stating, “My goal, put simply, was to help architects there begin thinking about the role architecture would play both during and after the siege”.⁵⁵ Consequently, his proposition transcends being a conventional architectural project; instead, it embarks on a journey to formulate an alternative way of thinking within a city profoundly impacted by conflict. Moreover, in this endeavour, he adeptly navigated an innovative presentation approach, attuned to the fragmented fabric engendered by the war’s aftermath in the city.

Woods introduces an alternative perspective for addressing the contested spaces within a city marked by the scars of conflict. His approach to the city is fragmented. He embraced the fragmented urban structure that materialised as a consequence of conflict, adapting his concepts and presentation style to harmonise with the city’s ‘realities’.

The concept of ‘Freespace’

In his *Berlin Free-Zone* (1990), *Zagreb Free-Zone* (1991), *War and Architecture Series* (1992-93), and *Sarajevo Projects* (1994), Woods developed the concept of ‘freespace’ as an alternative architectural engagement with the fluidity, unpredictability, and uncertainty of the city undergoing violent political and social transformations. Woods refers to the term ‘freespace’ as “an architecture of indeterminacy” in his book *Anarchitecture: Architecture is a Political Act*.⁵⁶ According to him, ‘freespaces’ are a matrix of unanticipated cultural, social, and political transformation possibilities hidden

54 Woods, “War and Architecture”.

55 Woods, *Slow Manifesto : Lebbeus Woods Blog*, 19.

56 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*, 10.

in human knowledge and creativity.⁵⁷ In other words, Woods envisions them as fertile ground for unexpected evolution, where the interaction of various influences can lead to new and unforeseen developments. The term 'freespaces' thus encapsulates a vision of multidimensional design potential where architecture becomes a catalyst for innovation and adaptation rather than a static imposition.

War not only destroys buildings or artefacts but also destroys social and cultural heritage. Given the impact of war on society, the 'freespace' provided by Woods can be interpreted as a rehabilitation zone because, in rebuilding their lives, individuals synthesise old and new experiences. Thus, it can be said that Woods imbues these areas with the potential to refresh and revitalise themselves, and he wants survivors to lead their own transformation without any limitations. He notes in his book *Radical Reconstruction*:

*Freespace is a new spatial manifestation of individual autonomy. It is not interpreted by a social group in the form of a pre-determined function or programme that is named, but only an individual set of actions, purposes, meanings, like freedom itself, is inherently useless and meaningless.*⁵⁸

Thus, 'freespaces' might be defined as spaces with no predetermined function but with a collection of potentials for occupation arising from material conditions and the narratives of those who inhabit them.

'Freespaces' or individual 'experimental laboratories' are not demanded by any of the authoritarian regimes or the existing cultural or social institutions. They only accept the authority of individuals' acts and moments on a landscape continuously in transformation. In *War and Architecture*, Woods also describes this concept as:

*...forms which do not invite occupation with the old paraphernalia of living, the old ways of living and thinking. They are not predesigned, predetermined, predictable, or predictive. They assert no control over the thoughts and behaviour of people by conforming to typologies and coercive programs of use to preestablished ideologies...Rather, they offer a dense matrix of new conditions as an armature for living as fully as possible in the present, for living experimentally.*⁵⁹

He adds that "no individual holds authority for long, because individual acts are ephemeral. ...no institution - political, social or cultural - exists to codify authority".⁶⁰ Therefore, with the concept of 'freespace', he encourages individuals to determine the function of the space and to inhabit it by rejecting any authoritarian power. In other words, in contrast to spaces designed in accordance with conventions of living and thinking, 'free spaces' deliberately challenge this conformity. They reject the predetermined patterns and predictability imposed by typologies and programmes of use tied to established

57 Woods, 10.

58 Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*.

59 Woods, "War and Architecture", 21.

60 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*, 10.

ideologies. Instead, they offer a ground for representing the possibilities of the present and exploring existence in its raw form.

In this context, 'free spaces' are a tribute to autonomy. These spaces, as Woods presents them, reject the imposition of authority by any political, social or cultural institution. They become expressions of the individual's creativity, resilience and adaptability. It calls on individuals to define their environment rather than be defined by it. They invite inhabitants to shape their surroundings, to stamp them with their own narratives, desires and dreams. Therefore, this concept, when considered in the context of contested spaces, refers to an alternative environment. In this alternative environment, the individual overcomes the limitations of the debate, ignores the rules imposed by it, and reconstructs the future threatened by it. It is, therefore, an alternative way of existence despite the realities of this contested space.

The concept of 'Heterarchy'

Woods notes that 'heteros' is the core of 'freespaces'.⁶¹ While he defines hierarchy as a system of order based on collective power invested in 'one', such as a leader, an elite, or an ideology, heterarchy is defined as a system of order based on the collective authority of many.⁶² Hierarchies produce monologues or declarations that originate from a single source and spread across and dominate a system. Heterarchies, on the other hand, take full responsibility for themselves as well as others and become a landscape of continuously changing authority.⁶³ It radically rejects existing architectural and urban design concepts that are controlled by an established hierarchy of authority that dictates in advance how spaces in the city are to be designed and used. Heterarchy, in other words, can be characterised as a system of order that allows individuals to self-organize, self-invent, and self-sustain themselves.

There are bureaucratising rules that force one to live by controlling power in a society. These bureaucratic rules, which cultures use to maintain a certain level of order in societies, can generally dictate an individual's choices of action and limit one's ability to attain a personal sense of meaning.⁶⁴ Although German sociologist and political economist Max Weber presents bureaucracy as an excellent model for people to build their social systems, systematise work rules, and distribute optimum means to achieve a desired end,⁶⁵ Woods points out that the living options and choices offered to the individual are limited in this system. The use of rationalisation for societal and cultural stability can be a very productive tool for maintaining social order and societal characteristics such as efficiency, predictability, or quantification at a certain level because it provides power control. However, at the same time, in order to maintain a rational social system,

61 Woods, 11.

62 Lebbeus Woods, "The Question of Space", in *Technoscience and Cyberculture*, ed. Stanley Aronowitz (New York: Routledge, 1996), 287–92.

63 Ibid.

64 James Magnuson, "A Mechanism for Parity: Lebbeus Woods's Freespace as a New Pattern of Urbanism", *Utopian Studies* 9, no. 1 (1998): 183–88.

65 George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, 20th anniv (Los Angeles ; London: SAGE, 2013).

a generalisation is used, which severely limits the life options and choices available to an individual citizen for the sake of the community.⁶⁶ Woods, however, rejects all such limitations with his concept of heterarchy.

According to Woods, the limitation of individual choice associated with the normative model of existing cultures is a sign of a hierarchical society, and Woods explains this system as “a pyramid”.⁶⁷ The empowered are at the top of the pyramid, and the individuals are located on the lowest level of this pyramid, representing society. Woods claims that the empowered at the top exist to maintain hierarchy and positions of dominance, not to serve the individuals below. Even if they are thought to represent individuals, they avoid any change, even if it is for the benefit of individuals, in order to maintain social order. Woods, however, rejects the bureaucratised rules of the socio-political system. According to Woods, the city is a phenomenon shaped by individual experiences. Each individual differs based on their own experiment, and these experiments increase in the city and become a chain that continues indefinitely. Thus, his ‘heterarchical concept’ focuses on individuals.⁶⁸

On the other hand, he indicates that only architects who design “non-types of buildings - the freespaces of unknown purpose and meaning -”⁶⁹ can turn the pyramid upside down. Because, with new urban forms and built environments, architecture is not only an embodiment of a culture’s values but also an active mechanism or power that, through its existence and use, maintains the agenda of the majority. It rejects the existing social forms imposed by the bureaucratic order and proposes new ones called “freespaces”. Therefore, Woods states in his book *Anarchitecture* that architecture is “inherently political”.⁷⁰ In other words, architectural acts can be considered political in the sense that they have a socially accepted meaning, can also reflect this meaning, or are resistible by societies or individuals.

Woods indicates that “heterarchy is always dialogical”.⁷¹ According to him, the interaction between individuals and between individuals and things produces dialogue, which is the important aspect of heterarchy.⁷² Dialogue prevents the centralised, hierarchical authorities of thought or architecture. He also believes that architecture as a place maker can help as a catalyst for the growth of the dialogue between monologues. In other words, differences arising in the interaction between individuals and their knowledge and experiences - heterarchies - obstruct the system of a specific political, social, or cultural autocratic power. The familiarity of architectural and social norms, the assurance of control by a stable authority, and the predictability, certainty, and routinisation of behaviours are abandoned in the free space provided by the heterarchical system. Thus, ‘heterarchy’ can be considered as a landscape of free-thinking and action authority that

66 Magnuson, “A Mechanism for Parity: Lebbeus Woods’s Freespace as a New Pattern of Urbanism”.

67 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*, 8.

68 Woods, 9.

69 Woods, 8.

70 Woods, 9.

71 Woods, “The Question of Space”.

72 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*, 11.

changes and diversifies depending on the constant interaction of its inhabitants.

His concepts, in the context of contested spaces, emerge with heuristic provocations, which are designed to ask questions, encourage dialogue, and comfort hard realities.⁷³ Woods argues that the 'freespaces' of the 'heterarchical system' force individuals to discover their own potential. Individuals who can occupy the 'freespace', according to Woods, can only exist on their own authority, unaffected by others. On the one hand, he advocates strong communication between individuals, but this dialogue should never become a dominant totalitarian authority. Therefore, individuals need to be clear in their thoughts and actions. Because 'freespaces' are concretely conceived existential realisations, not idealised abstractions.⁷⁴ This concept of 'freespace' offers a ground of experience for the individual to experience an alternative way of occupying space in the face of changing conditions with any violence, threat or even war. Thus, it can be stated that Woods' emphasis on constant change, transformation, and the necessity of being individually expressive in the concepts of 'freespace' and 'heterarchy' are intrinsically quite provocative for individuals who want to change in a hierarchical society.

A healing process for war-damaged space

The process of healing war-damaged spaces, as delineated by Woods within his Sarajevo project, encapsulates a series of distinct yet interconnected concepts that reflect his alternative architectural perspective within the context of a city ravaged by conflict. He identifies four conceptual phases of healing, namely the 'injection', the 'scar', the 'scab', and the eventual emergence of 'new tissue'. These unfold as emblematic stages of reconstruction.

Delving into the intricate interplay between body and architecture as elucidated by the architectural historian and theorist Dalibor Vesely in his work "The Architectonics of Embodiment", one encounters "a fusion of horizons in which the nature of the human body and its relation to architecture and the rest of reality, changes into one of embodiment and its structure".⁷⁵ Vesely underscores the role of analogy in symbolisation, where the alignment of the soul and body, the intelligible realm of reality and its tangible corporeal manifestation, engenders a nuanced conduit of comprehension.⁷⁶ In other words, familiar notions of the body serve as a medium for creating a better understanding and embodiment of architectural ideas, as well as assisting in the opening of a dialectical structure.

Within this paradigm, Woods establishes a parallel between the scarring encountered by human bodies and the architectural elements intrinsic to his project, thereby revealing a symbiotic link between recovery and reconstruction, a connection that materialises tangibly. Furthermore, Woods' architectural language emanates from a foundation intertwined with

73 Joseph Giovannini, "Beyond the Line: Understanding the Third Dimension in the Work of a Master Draftsman", *Architectural Record* 192, no. 11 (2004): 87.

74 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*, 16.

75 Dalibor Vesely, "The Architectonics of Embodiment", in *Body and Building*, ed. George Dodds and Robert Tavernor (London, England: The MIT Press, 2002), 28–43.

76 Vesely.

the human body, serving either as an analogical representation of the urban fabric or as a generator for the geometries and forms of structures, encompassing ruins and edifices of the city. An interview with Woods, conducted by Sebastiano Olivotto and subsequently published in the work *Slow Manifesto*, imparts a critical insight. When asked about the scar and scab concepts in his engagement with war and its indelible aftermath, Woods avers that this is not tantamount to architecture imitating surgical procedures; instead, it is architecture fulfilling its inherent purpose – addressing human conditions and predicaments, endeavouring “to formulate space with the potential to enable new ways of thinking and living, those resulting from the trauma of war”.⁷⁷ Although Woods argues the precise technical equivalence of ‘surgery’⁷⁸ as a metaphor within architecture, the evocative language of the human physique furnishes him with a potent tool to articulate the underpinnings of his Sarajevo project.

These terminologies, far beyond being mere vehicles of visualisation, encapsulate the ethos of the endeavour. In the wake of war’s ruins and its aftermath, the impulse to rebuild persists among survivors. Hence, Woods’ conceptual constructs can be construed as a manifestation of the curative progression inherent to a city marred by conflict, taking on the semblance of an injured corporeal entity. Each phase – Injection, Scab, Scar, and ultimately, New Tissue – can be discerned as a sequential facet of this convalescence. Within the framework of the Sarajevo project, these concepts assume an organic harmony with the devastated urban landscape, assimilating its fractured condition into its aesthetic fabric.⁷⁹ The ‘injection’ phase introduces new structures ‘injected’ into voids that the upheaval has left in its wake. The structures do not fit exactly but “exist as space within space, making no attempt to reconcile the gaps between what is new and old”.⁸⁰ The ‘scab’, akin to the initial layer of a healing wound, shields nascent interior spaces or voids, providing safeguarding during subsequent transformative processes.⁸¹ The ‘scar’, a more profound stratum of construction, orchestrates a fusion of the new and the extant, harmonising and amalgamating them without compromising the integrity of either, eschewing any contextual or uniformity-driven concessions.⁸² Finally, the emergence of ‘new tissue’, akin to an organic-machine morphology, unfurls upon the city’s texture. This evolving city texture “demands an architecture that rises from and sinks back into fluidity, into the turbulence of a continually changing matrix of conditions, into an eternal, ceaseless flux”.⁸³ As a result, Woods’ approach, as encapsulated in these sequential phases, unravels a poetically orchestrated choreography of architectural revival, wherein the scars of conflict metamorphose into sites of renewal and innovation, exemplifying an architecture that is perpetually in symbiosis with change and growth.

77 Woods, *Slow Manifesto : Lebbeus Woods Blog*, 139–40.

78 It is described as the branch of medical practice that treats injuries, diseases, and deformities by the physical removal, repair, or readjustment of organs and tissues, often involving cutting into the body, in Oxford University Press, “OxfordLanguages”, accessed September 15, 2021.

79 Neil Leach, *The Anaesthetics of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 29.

80 Woods, “War and Architecture”, 21.

81 Woods, 24.

82 Woods, 31.

83 Woods, 36.

Injections

*In the spaces voided by destruction, new structures are injected.*⁸⁴

New structures, or '*injections*' injected into the existing architecture, are linked to the 'freespaces' of the war-damaged city, which are described as forms that do not invite occupation with old paraphernalia of living, the old ways of living and thinking.⁸⁵ The injections are formed in the voids left by the war. However, examination of the gaps created by war means acceptance of the fundamental void, invalid meanings, and uncertainty of the 'emptiness' of space.⁸⁶ Thus, the aim of finding gaps is to promote the culture of emptiness rather than praise the culture of emptiness. In other words, from Woods' perspective, in the war where everything loses its meaning, the emptiness has the potential to create spaces that provoke human existence. The aim of injection is not to fill the gaps according to the reassurance of control by stable authority or the old rules that underpin a particular system of order, in contrast, it is to provide 'emptiness', which means 'freedom' for survivalist one.

The works of Woods from his Sarajevo projects offer a variety of room for interpretation, criticism, and evaluation, and it might be argued that it is precisely this open-ended nature of 'freespace' that allows for different readings and encourages the tension between imagination and reality.⁸⁷ The injections, which are created with fragments that are stained with red in places with metallic grey and none of them are the same, can mislead people and bring into question whether this is the weapon that destroyed the structure. As Woods states, "Architecture must learn to transfer the violence, even as violence knows how to transform architecture".⁸⁸ Individual experiences shape 'freespaces,' but these experiences cannot be based solely on the past, which takes the form of personal pre-war memories and reflections as well as a social consensus of history and traditions. Individuals, according to Woods, must re-invent themselves as a result of their new war experiences, which teach them the value of war's emptiness.

Architectural theorist and practitioner Bernard Tschumi parallels Woods' discourse by underscoring the inextricable nexus between space and action. Tschumi's work 'Violence and Architecture' underscores the symbiotic relationship between architecture, drawing, and notation that mediate this action in space. The aphorism that "There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without programme. By extension, there is no architecture without violence" encapsulates Tschumi's perspective on the indispensability of action in architectural conception.⁸⁹ Architecture derives its strength from shifting forces, patterns of unpredictable movement, changes of mind, changes of

84 Woods, 21.

85 Ibid.

86 Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 27.

87 Aarati Kanekar, "Between Drawing and Building", *Journal of Architecture (London, England)* 15, no. 6 (2010): 771–94.

88 Woods, "War and Architecture", 24.

89 Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 121.



10 - The Sarajevo Project, No.9, from *Radical Reconstruction*, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

location, spontaneous fragmentation and synthesis.⁹⁰ Therefore, by incorporating Woods and Tschumi's approaches, one can discern an analogous appreciation for the constructive dimensions of conflict. For both, war becomes an impetus for architectural ingenuity. In this symbiotic confluence, war serves not solely as a force of dissolution but also as a catalyst for creativity, a testament to architecture's resilience in the face of adversity.

Similar to Tschumi, Woods emphasises the potential within the post-war landscape, viewing it as an opportunity. Both architects engage with the city's transformation by acknowledging its new fragments. Wars bring destruction and loss, reshaping a city and sometimes leaving indelible marks. However, amid these adverse conditions, new fragments also emerge. The reception of these fragments by the city's inhabitants remains uncertain. Some may strive to erase the war's memory and fully revert to the past, or some keep it as a new history. Woods asserts that embracing the new post-war reality is indispensable. This embrace should not be misconstrued as surrender; rather, Woods views the war-forged fragments as a shield – the inaugural components of viable existence, epitomising individual freedom. Therefore, Woods envisions the city's recalibrated configuration as a repository of these fragments, which represent a form of resistance, an uprising of the individual. Within this repository, awareness of the war's unfavourable aftermath provides the opportunity to seek useful fragments. This enables individuals to carve out their living spaces within the reshaped urban landscape. Even within total destruction, the remnants of the old environment foreshadow the creation of new spaces.

90 Woods, "War and Architecture", 36.

The Scab

*The first layer of new construction shields an exposed interior space or void, protecting it during its subsequent transformation.*⁹¹

Woods employs a thematic framework rather than a chronological one to illuminate the experimental and enduring character at the core of his Sarajevo endeavour. Within this framework, he presents a visual narrative that highlights the transformative evolution of cityscapes after deliberate devastation. His process shows the intricate relationship between physical and psychological constructs societies weave. Through a universal language, Woods clarifies this connection, making the Sarajevo project emblematic. It underscores that challenges faced by one city can resonate as an edifice of civilisation itself.

While interpreting images can vary, Woods clarifies that his goal was not to create a new architectural aesthetic. However, questions can arise about the aesthetics of Woods' architecture, formed from fluid and tectonic shapes contrasting the urban environment. In his visionary realm, he envisages a distinct aesthetic that stands in contrast to the prevailing surroundings yet remains easily recognisable within the designated area. The architectural shapes he conceived for the project resonate with metallic compositions evocative of military components or machinery. These dynamic forms seem to exist independently from their surroundings, evoking a sense of unfamiliar settlement. Thus, it can be said that even though his intention did not revolve around making a precise architectural style, the architectural language employed by Woods in the context of the Sarajevo project is undeniably different.

This can be attributed to the concepts he introduced. Proposing that architects serve as enforcers of the physical and social order dictated by political authority and dominant ideology and that these architects are often unaware of this role, Woods challenges this situation through the concepts of 'heteros' and "freespace". He portrays architects not merely as professionals but as instigators and active participants. He sees architects in a constant state of transformation, akin to revolutionaries. However, he notes in his essay 'Freespace and the Tyranny of Types' that this should not be seen as an "architecture of revolution".⁹² According to him, architecture itself, along with the systems and changes it proposes, constitutes a revolution. Therefore, he applies architecture to present his revolution, and he presents his revolution with this unique architecture. In other words, the architecture he pursues in contested spaces heralds the revolution his ideas could bring to the city.

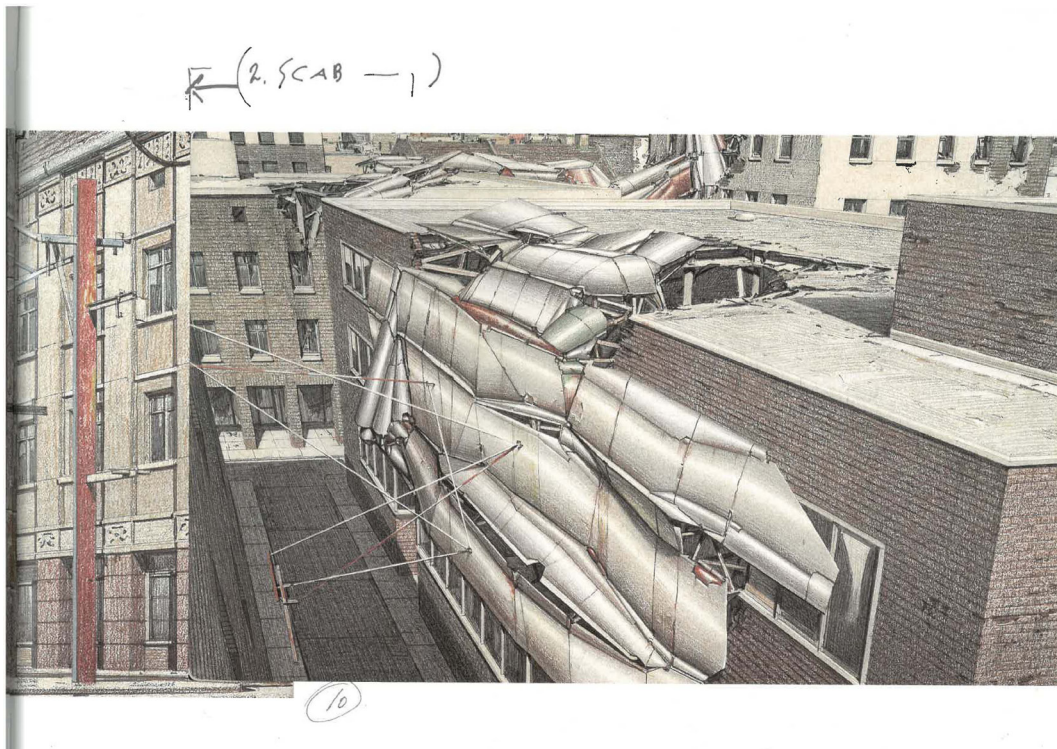
In his book *Slow Manifesto*, Woods also notes that his intention was to embody the attitude of the local people during the war, and that Michelangelo's designs for the walls of Florence, which had a fluid design, were the inspiration for his designs.⁹³ Michelangelo's

91 Woods, 24.

92 Lebbeus Woods, "Freespace and the Tyranny of Types", in *The End of Architecture? : Documents and Manifestos : Vienna Architecture Conference*, ed. Peter Noever (Munich: Munich : Prestel Verlag, 1993).

93 Woods, *Slow Manifesto : Lebbeus Woods Blog*, 199.

design for the fortification of Florence arose as a response to the political and military context of the era, primarily as a defensive measure. However, Woods suggests that these structures symbolise the potential for rebirth. Though seemingly paradoxical, this can be understood as a result of the conditions within conflict-ridden spaces. Woods also aims to develop a defence mechanism against the impositions of the contested environment, to create 'freespaces' for individuals where no power could dominate. As a result, when assessing the city's fragmented texture, it can be said that Woods positions these structures in contrast to the constraints linked with conflict and displays of power as a defensive structure.



11 - The Sarajevo Project, No.10, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

Woods aspires to merge profound formal architectural concerns with the most challenging social conditions. To this end, he advocates for the plasticity of form that transforms the 'scab' into an innovative vessel for dialogues about construction, cooperative paradigms, and organisational architectures. The architectural language, distinct from the fabric of the city it births, is woven from materials sourced from the very war itself. In simpler terms, he articulates his intent to craft a distinctive space using the materials of war, thereby observing the potential of what emerges from a process traditionally viewed as destructive. This can be interpreted as a new perspective on the evolution of war itself - counteracting its imposed limitations with the potential it unveils.

Despite the seemingly transient nature of these buildings, Woods contends that they shape the new fabric of the city. During war, people build temporary structures to protect themselves from bomb fragments or snipers. However, Woods states that such makeshift structures are actually the target of those who started the war. A city covered with shields is a sign of a culturally, socially and economically decadent environment. Considering the

Sarajevans' consistent stance against war, evident in their attitudes, designs, and projects, Woods argues that "to survive and frustrate the enemies of their refined culture, people need a sense of order in their world, one that is consciously created, or designed".⁹⁴ Thus, he states that his intention is to create architecture by moulding materials that exist in space, such as scrap, metal, wood or cardboard. Woods' architectural concepts are evidently influenced by the societal and environmental context of the location. His architectural project aims to instil pride in the city's survivors, showcasing their resilience. He employs found materials to demonstrate the viability of such resilience even amidst adverse economic conditions and constructs spatial compositions from fragments of conflict.

On the other hand, this work is not merely an expression of creativity in the war-damaged environment but also a challenge deeply aligned with his own conceptual framework. Woods supports his concepts with the extraordinary architecture depicted in his images. Despite his engineering background, he engages in architecture that is intricate or unfeasible to construct in reality. According to his concepts, he is uninterested in "cleaning up the mess or fixing up the damage".⁹⁵ He perceives architecture as a medium for transformation. The drawings he creates for his projects serve as inspirational guides for individuals, whether architects or not, who aspire to create an architecture of change without insisting on rigid adherence to the available materials and circumstances. In his words, "The role of architecture on this landscape is instrumental, not expressive. It is a tool extending individual capacities to do, to think, to know, to become, but also pass away, to become an echo, a vestige, a soul for other acts, moments, individuals".⁹⁶ Thus, it can be posited that he devises forms that are deliberately challenging to actualise. He does not propose concepts with the aim of constructing structures; instead, he seeks the most intricate forms to ensure their realisation is nearly impossible. Hence, his intention with these depictions of novel architecture is not to rehabilitate the environment but to furnish alternative perspectives for individuals aiming to act from unconventional perspectives during crises.

In parallel, German artist Joseph Beuys' concept of 'Social Sculpture' exhibits resonances with Woods' organically burgeoning spatial constructs. In Beuys' essay "I Am Searching for Field Character", he expounds upon an evolved aesthetic and socio-political consciousness that augments the realm of art to encompass the construction of a "social organism as a work of art" within the purview of "Social Sculpture/Social Architecture".⁹⁷ Beuys' term encapsulates his expansive vision where art transcends traditional boundaries, merging with life. It not only dissolves the line between art and existence but also takes a malleable form, becoming a conduit for dialogue, cooperative practices, and structural configurations. This potency extends to cognitive shifts, interactions, economic

94 Woods, 199.

95 Geoff Manaugh, "Without Walls: An Interview with Lebbeus Woods", 2007, <https://www.bldgblog.com/2007/10/without-walls-an-interview-with-lebbeus-woods/>.

96 Woods, *Anarchitecture: Architecture as a Political Act*, 10.

97 Joseph Beuys, "I Am Searching for Field Character", in *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America*, ed. Carin Kuoni (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990), 21–23.

relationships, and societal fabric. Beuys envisions society transformed into an expansive tapestry of artistry, forging a radical connection between human agency and the natural world.⁹⁸

Similar to Beuys' philosophy, Woods seeks to foster dialogue through architecture as a tool for societal engagement. The parallels between these two perspectives are evident in their shared aspiration to extend the boundaries of creativity, cultivating spaces where architectural forms serve as a locus for dialogue, exchange, and transformation, ultimately engendering profound changes in both the physical and metaphysical dimensions of our world. But its adaptation to contested spaces also provides a new perspective. Woods underlines that the post-war transformative power of the city is fuelled by the fragments created by war. That is to say, the conditions created by the war offer a starting point for the city and its inhabitants to get back to their lives.

The Scar

*A deeper level of construction fuses the new and the old, reconciling, coalescing them, without compromising either one in the name of a contextual or other form of unity.*⁹⁹

In his book *Radical Reconstruction*, Woods states two drawing principles: “draw architecture as if it were already built”; and “build architecture as if it had never been drawn”.¹⁰⁰ The principle of “draw as if it has already been built” allows for the abstract form of another way of life within the void of meaning that can be concretely realised. Conversely, “build as if it had never been drawn” facilitates the experimental architecture of freedom in response to the reality of the ruined city. By drawing the distinction between the abstract form and the concrete realities of the ruined city, Woods establishes a dialogue as a process of healing - a process that he contends is not cosmetic but, through the articulation of differences, both divides and unifies, as argued in “War and Architecture”.¹⁰¹ In other words, Woods underlines the necessity of grasping the consequences of a destroyed environment and, at the same time, nurturing an unbridled field of imagination. The commonality of these seemingly disparate principles in contested spaces, dialogue as Woods calls it, allows for the creation of spaces that encompass both the wisdom of past experience and the unlimited potential of forward-looking creativity.

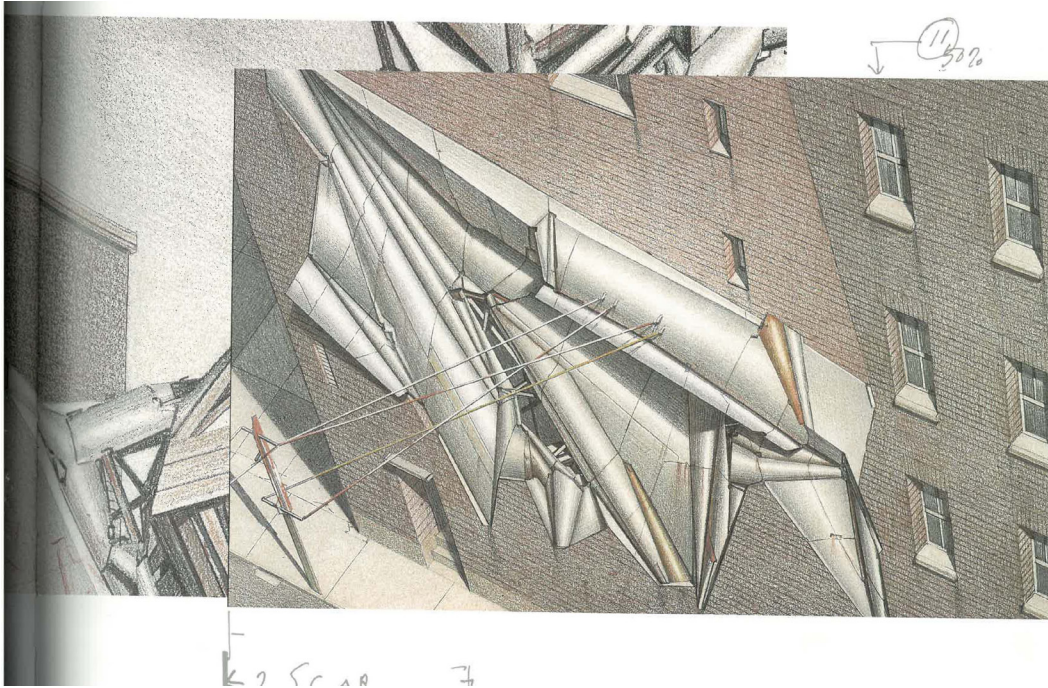
This interplay also creates spaces that are favourable for both individual and social life. These spaces, covered by scabrous, fragmentary architecture, became the place to enhance new forms of knowledge; they form concrete pockets of revolutionary experience within the fragmented remnants of the old order, distinctly structured from the usual structures of everyday life. Referred to as “Freespaces” following Woods' framework, as discussed above, these areas epitomise the embodiment of individual

98 David Adams, “Joseph Beuys: Pioneer of a Radical Ecology”, *Art Journal* (New York. 1960) 51, no. 2 (1992): 26–34.

99 Woods, “War and Architecture”, 31.

100 Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 30.

101 Woods, “War and Architecture”, 31.



12 - The Sarajevo Project, No.11, from *Radical Reconstruction*, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993
 freedom, concurrently serving as new social arenas where individuals collectively refine and propagate these concepts among themselves. While allowing individuals the freedom to live in spaces that are in accordance with their own vision, these spaces also develop social dynamics. This collaborative undertaking empowers communities autonomously to create their vision independent of external authority. In this context, architecture, in synergy with the radical autonomy of space, allows for new ways of living in contested space - a process wherein communities construct their distinct visions unshackled by external authority.

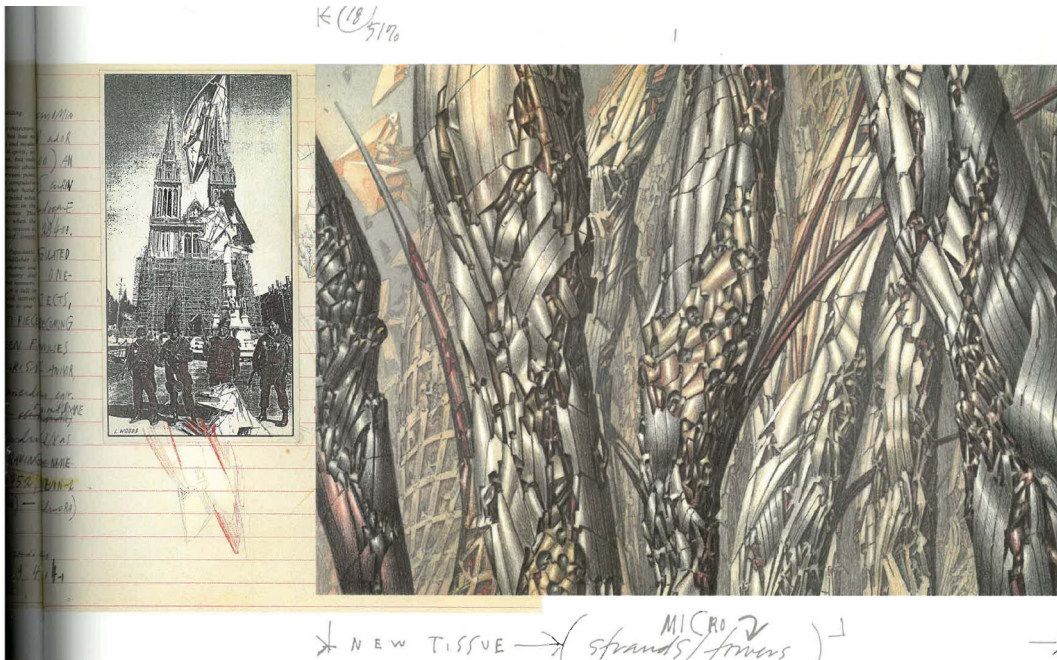
New Tissue

*Architecture of a philosophy of interference, the forms of which are infinitely varied, a vocabulary of words spoken only once, then forgotten.*¹⁰²

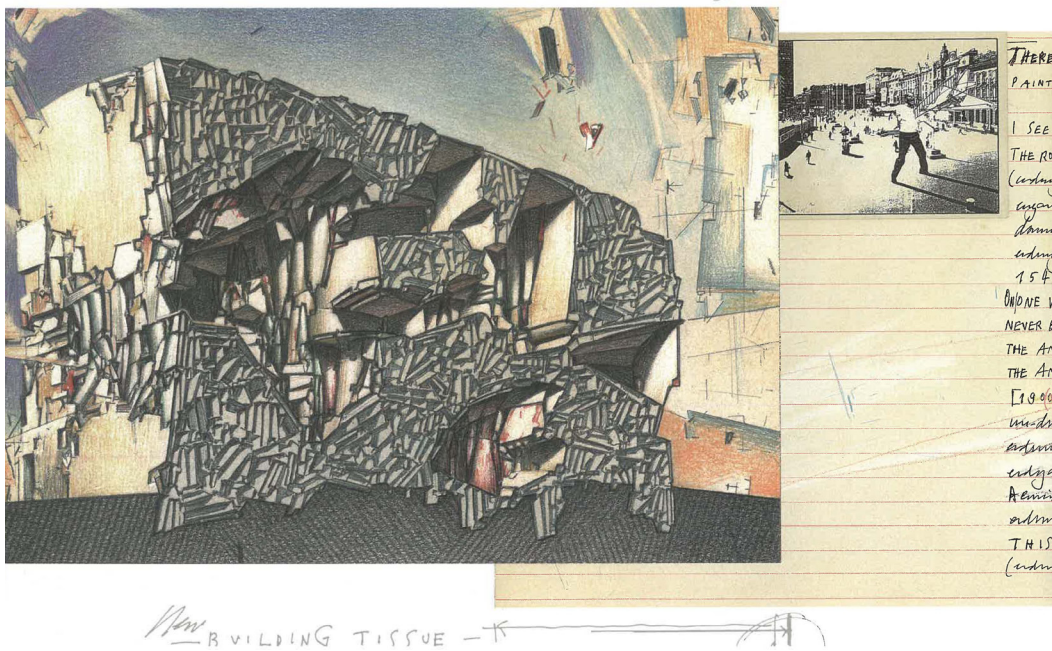
The new fabric represents a new way of life in the war-torn environment through carefully constructed joints with the old fabric. According to Woods' theory, the architecture he proposes will dominate the entire fabric of the city and eventually the world, ultimately becoming the 'New Fabric'. Woods notes that architecture can respond to the "turbulence of an ever-changing matrix of conditions" in any city and that these will be mediated through dialogues.¹⁰³ That is to say, the architecture of change Woods proposes, created in contested spaces, is an architecture of displaced people seeking permanence in a vanishing world or of those seeking a place, an architecture that moves and that is contemptuous of the politicians who claim control over them, and in its dominance influences and multiplies its surroundings. Therefore, the 'new fabric' is a general representation of this proliferating architecture. In other words, it is the reflection of the individual's alternative way of living in society.

¹⁰² Woods, 36.

¹⁰³ Woods, "War and Architecture".



13 - The Sarajevo Project, No.18, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993



14 - The Sarajevo Project, No.20, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

Absence, Disillusionment and Bereavement

Lebbeus Woods' concepts illuminate an alternative approach to understanding, knowing, and shaping war-damaged environments, providing a distinct process that resonates as a healing endeavour. Within the ruins of a devastated city, where resurgence becomes imperative for its inhabitants, Woods introduces the notions of 'freespaces' and 'heterarchy' as pivotal catalysts. Understanding these ideas emerges as the key to unlocking the potential within contested spaces. 'Freespace' epitomises a realm where possibilities converge to forge new lives without any limitation, divorced from the constraints of history and the present, yet evolving through lessons learned from them. 'Heterogeneity' refers

← THE NEW 'Earth' - (~~etc~~ cracking along)

(30) 60% (this side)
61%



(29) →
50%

of the Lines of OLD FAULTS -)



RNA V 4 9 0
N 1 4 0 0 5
0 — 9 3 3
DE V 0 4
E N D - E V

15 - The Sarajevo Project, No.29, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

to a multifaceted society, whereas conflict seeks to extinguish it. Woods, however, points out the potency of diversity, asserting that societal flourishing finds root in multiplicity. Consequently, understanding the complicated relationship between war and society in contested spaces provides insights into exploring and reshaping the collective ethos.

Recognising the absence, disillusionment, and bereavement that war causes, Woods' concepts reject their dominion. He contends that the ascent to potentiality is only possible through the rejection of these constraints. Hence, the unearthing potential within contested spaces commences with the realisation that shackles of restriction are discarded, and the erstwhile order lies fragmented. Subsequently, individuals are encouraged to build their lives within the gaps created by conflict, thereupon imprinting their unique way of living in these gaps to begin their personal journey of healing. Recognising the challenge of erecting a structure symbolising life within a city devastated by war, Woods adopts a fragmentation. The war-damaged city emerges as fragments, interlacing past and present, with their latent potential underscored by Woods' interconnection. He posits that the city's reconstitution is possible with its fragments, as these vestiges encapsulate the city's void as well as the war's material remnants, becoming an emblem of defiance against limitations, signifying a future yet to be unfurled.

Woods' architectural approach, although designed as a proposal, transcends the realm of implementation, materialising as an avenue of unconventional contemplation. Woods refrains from issuing directives rather offers a cognitive approach, wherein individuals discern the interstices amid their constructs. Moreover, this approach offers salient points for the following study. First, it emphasises awareness within contested spaces, comprising boundaries and their rejections. While Woods avoids overt political alignment, the project inherently echoes his political stance due to its contextual background. Secondly, Woods provides a conceptual framework for navigating contested spaces that are intimately associated with the city's fragmentary nature. While a comprehensive urban scheme is not his intent, his fragmented cognitive scheme implies the proliferation of these ideas. Additionally, even as an outsider in Sarajevo, Woods creates a voice within contested spaces, vested in his practice as an architect. His mode of expression - nonlinear and inventive - emerges as a pivotal revelation of this study. Focusing on his creative practice within contested spaces, the following section will go on to examine Woods' method of representation, shedding initial light on the relationship between creative practice and inquiry through presentation.

Woods' representational techniques

Lebbeus Woods' primary medium of expression was paper, colour, and images, leading to his recognition as a 'paper architect'.¹⁰⁴ His visionary projects manifested on paper

¹⁰⁴ The term 'paper architecture' is commonly used to describe architects who create unrealisable projects with utopian, dystopian, or fantastical concepts. Woods, together with Christoph A. Kumpusch, has only one constructed work: The Light Pavilion installation at China's Raffles City complex, designed by Steven Holl Architects. Since all of Woods' designs exist only on paper and haven't been built, he is defined as a Paper Architect in various sources. In Nishat Awan, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011); Lewis Wallace, "Lebbeus Woods: The Architect Who Dared to Ask 'What If?'" , *Wired*, 2013; Joseph Becker, "Drawn In: The Rendered Visions of Lebbeus Woods", in *The Drawing Papers: Lebbeus Woods: Architect*, ed. Margaret Sundell, vol. 114 (Minnesota: The Drawing Center, 2014), 10–15; Kanekar, "Between Drawing and Building".

have not only characterised his engagement with a visual and textual medium but have also played an instrumental role in shaping a progressive architectural discourse. His adept use of this medium has allowed him to convey innovative ideas within contested contexts. For instance, during the 1988 Kyong Park exhibition at the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York, Woods introduced “Terra Nova” as a prospective architectural and political solution to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Similarly, his involvement with the urban landscape of Havana in 1995 coincided with Cuba’s post-revolutionary transition to communism. Amidst the divided Berlin of the 1990s, Woods conceived the “Underground Berlin” project, envisioning an underground community along U-Bahn lines to counter the constraints of the Berlin Wall. These projects turned architectural drawings into Woods’ narrative medium, offering strategies to navigate intricate systems within contested spaces and times of crisis.

Woods articulated his ambition in *Slow Manifesto*, aiming to create recognisable imagery of famous artistic and architectural constructs within unfamiliar settings. He aimed to assemble a repository of potential within unclaimed spaces through his images. In clarifying his intent, Woods expressed that his “War and Architecture” “work was not aimed at proposing the reconstruction of particular buildings - that should be the work of local architects - but at deriving guiding principles”.¹⁰⁵ The architectural constructs he engaged with were meant as illustrative embodiments of these principles, contextualised to particular scenarios rather than concrete building proposals. He emphasised:

*Architects are idea people. We have concepts and make designs that embody or implement them. We present them as clearly and openly as possible and can only hope that others will find them useful to their ends and build them.*¹⁰⁶

This portrayal of Woods’ purpose underscores his communication effort, endeavouring to illuminate alternative potentials. He employed the universal language of image-making to effectively convey his concepts, utilising this visual medium for communication.

Woods presents a visual world through the images he creates. Unlike conventional architectural drawings featuring plans, elevations, or axonometric views, which guide finalised structures, Woods conveys his ideas through renderings, abstract geometric sketches, perspectives, and manipulated images akin to cinematic scenes. Accompanying these visuals, his textual narratives elaborate on his interpretations of the paper-based proposals.

What follows will delve into the visual representation techniques employed by Woods in the Sarajevo project, categorised as drawing, manipulated imagery, and storytelling. This exploration will offer an analysis of Woods’ image-making methodology. This is a remarkable fusion where architectural representation, image-making, and storytelling seamlessly converge to envision potential trajectories within contested spaces. It seems to revive the potential of the architectural manifesto, revitalising its creative capacity to inspire and provoke transformative architectural thinking in contested spaces.

105 Woods, *Slow Manifesto : Lebbeus Woods Blog*, 200.

106 Woods, 20.

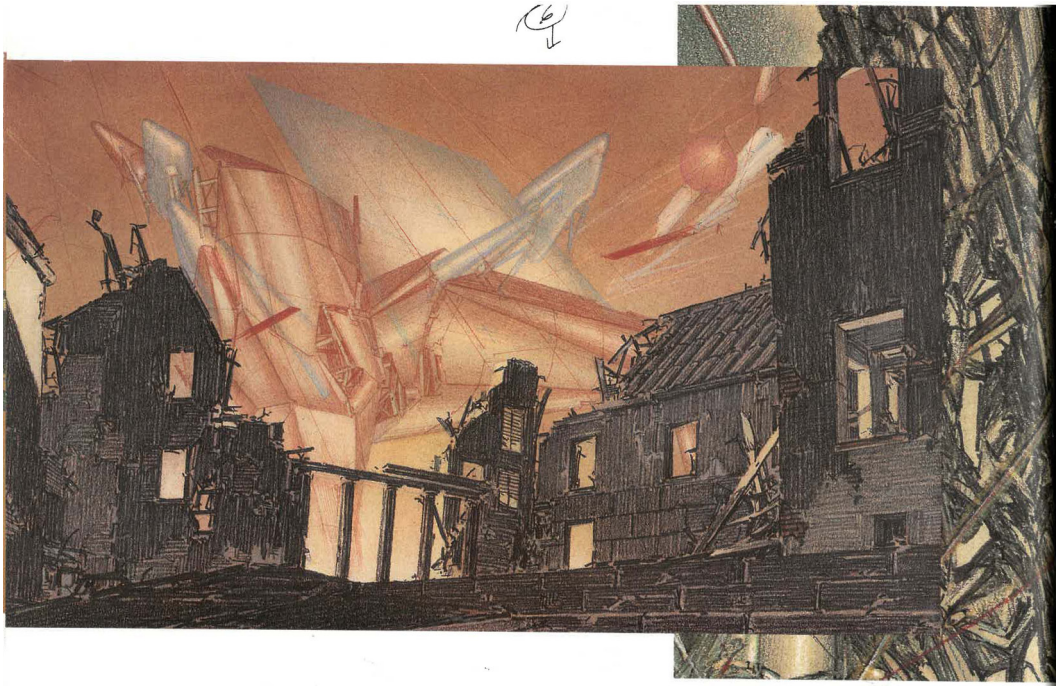
Drawing scenes

Woods' experimental drawings served a dual purpose: as tools for refining his concepts and for creating scenes, conveying those ideas within his architectural project. The uniqueness of Woods' artistic language is evident as he orchestrated a collage-like layered atmosphere within his drawings, each stratum bearing significance in its positioning. This layering facilitates the reader's navigation through the visual narrative, discerning foreground from background and perceiving nuances in the interplay between layers. The drawings themselves stand as a representation of two distinct facets: the war-damaged environment; and Woods' proposed interventions. As such, these layered compositions become a visual dialect, articulating the contrast between the aftermath of conflict and the potential for architectural rejuvenation. This visual depth thus becomes an important element in apprehending Woods' intricate conceptual realm.

Woods' drawings not only manifest a creative methodology but also echo a poetic technique, showcasing a remarkable visual ingenuity within the realm of architecture. His Sarajevo Project is created through a series of drawings, each capturing a distinct moment within the city's war-damaged landscape, interpreted through the lens of his conceptual framework. These drawings, while bearing resemblances, draw parallels with the artistic technique known as *capriccio*. As introduced in Chapter 1, *capriccio*, a prevalent form of artistic expression, especially in painting and drawing, is characterised by intricate spatial and iconographic elements. Employing techniques like selective composition, spatial and historical compression, repetition, and creative reordering, *capriccios* synthesise elements - such as buildings, ruins, and urban landscapes - from memory, imagination, and architectural invention into an emulating and intriguing synthesis presented as an image. Thus, it can be said that Woods' representation of the Sarajevo Project resembles those described as a *capriccio*.

However, it is important to note that Woods' approach is not a direct emulation of *capriccio*. Instead, it reflects its cognitive process and execution methodology. *Capriccio* involves re-organising, re-composing, and transforming buildings, ruins, landscapes, and urban settings processed from memory, imagination, and architectural invention into an emulating and intriguing synthesis.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Woods' drawings engage in spatial speculation, where Sarajevo serves as a subject. Using the city as a canvas, he expresses not only an interpretation of Sarajevo, but also a re-imagined iteration that emerges from his perspective. Diverging from *capriccio*'s paradigm, Woods infuses his drawings with architectural propositions that diverge significantly from the portrayal of Sarajevo's reality. Resembling the layered composition of *capriccios*, these drawings are composed of layers, inviting viewers to uncover the complex dialogue between the layers of proposed architectural interventions and the layers of the devastated cityscape. These layered compositions offer a glimpse into the envisaged metamorphosis of contested spaces, revealing Woods' desire for transformation.

¹⁰⁷ Lucien Steil, *The Architectural Capriccio: Memory, Fantasy and Invention, The Architectural Capriccio: Memory, Fantasy and Invention*, 2016.



16 - The Sarajevo Project, No.6, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

Woods' drawings have a potency which verges on the aggressive in their aesthetic language. He juxtaposes the ruins he envisages for the war-damaged environment alongside additional architectural elements, unveiling his adeptness in expressing architectural concepts through a distinctive drawing style. Through this artful interplay, the existing built environment emerges in a tone mirroring reality, providing a striking contrast to his architectural proposals that come to the fore with heightened hues, frequently rendered in shades of blue/grey and red. These divergent tonalities give rise to a dual narrative. The architectural facets depicted in blue/grey tones appear to embark on a quest for harmonious coexistence with the ruins and quiet synchrony amidst the devastation. In contrast, the structures depicted in blood/red tones evoke a palpable sense of collision, like vessels hurtling through the fabric of reality. This portrayal echoes Woods' proposition that the remnants of conflict should be harnessed for the city's reconstruction, a profound symbol of resurrection amidst destruction. When interpreting these visual narratives, the crimson airborne fragments persist as emblems of war's haunting legacy, while the blue/grey elements symbolise the emergence of a new life woven into the texture of the renewed urban order. It is important to recognise, however, that interpretations remain subjective due to the inherently open-ended nature of visual representation, inviting diverse perspectives and reflections.

Woods uses drawing as an experimental laboratory in which visual art becomes a transformative medium for both personal introspection and architectural exploration. Drawing, according to Woods, serves as a catalyst for the evolution of his consciousness. In his essay 'Why I Became an Architect', he notes, "It was the art's celebratory aspect, its exaltation of light, uniting its presence with profoundly important concepts - the struggle to be fully human - that touched me so deeply. Works of art could lift experience out of

the commonplace to a realm of meaning that, for me, would otherwise be unreachable".¹⁰⁸ This unique perspective underscores Woods' belief in artistic drawing as a new mode of perception. It provides him with a distinct vantage point to engage with his concepts, experimenting with their nuances and intricacies. In this symbiotic relationship, the drawings nurture and are guided by his architectural concepts, converging to create an experimental visualisation of the alternative world Woods envisions. This amalgamation synthesises concepts and sketches into a harmonious narrative, staging his distinctive architectural approach.

Manipulated images

Woods also uses collage techniques in the presentation of his project, which is different from the drawing technique. He employs two production techniques: the classical cut-and-paste method, a combination of cut-out image fragments, and image manipulation through drawing and colouring, applying the transparency nature of collage. Despite the diversity of techniques, all collages convey a provocative and political nature due to the fragments they incorporate. They extend beyond mere illustration or reinforcement of ideas; they seek to evoke emotions and provoke contemplation. In the Sarajevo Project, these collages serve a crucial role within his conceptual framework, offering a complementary dimension to his drawings.

Woods' collages, created by cut and paste technique, act as an unexpected awakening due to their distinct political undertones and their location in the presentation of the project. The cut-and-paste collages prominently feature fragments referencing Sarajevo and the war, presenting clear and provocative messages. They positioned between his drawings generate a 'shock' moment, as Benjamin describes it.¹⁰⁹ These fragments, drawn directly from Sarajevo's war imagery, present an abrupt juxtaposition to the drawn narrative, provoking questions and awakening the viewer's engagement. This juxtaposition establishes an ironic connection between the fictional world depicted in the drawings and the harsh reality of the war. For example, one collage has silhouettes of individuals against an urban landscape, seemingly commanding the space. The silhouettes, particularly one gazing sharply while the other speaks assertively into a microphone, convey political authority. This collage captures a sense of power dynamics, political chaos, and military atmosphere during wartime. Similarly, another collage merges a military tank with a building's facade, evoking narratives about besieged structures and architectural defence strategies. [17-18]

The collages created through drawing and painting necessitate a more focused observation and active reading than their cut-and-paste counterparts. They are designed to be larger than cut-and-paste collages and have their own page. Woods employs layering and transparency, adding complexity to the visual experience. By partially obscuring fragments on the newspaper clippings using black paint, he constructs a subdued yet impactful ambience. One such collage features a newspaper clipping from the Sarajevo

108 Woods, *Slow Manifesto* : *Lebbeus Woods Blog*.

109 Please see Part I, Chapter I Collage, *Contested Space and Agency*.



17 - Collaged image from the Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993



18 - Collaged image from the Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

Serbian Plan Would

By JOHN F. BURNS
Special to The New York Times

Sarajevo, July 12 — Muslim leaders in Sarajevo have rejected a Serbian plan to carve Bosnia into ethnic states for Muslims, Serbs and Croats. Serbian nationalist leaders are pushing a proposal toward the partitioning of Bosnia as an independent political force.

Leaders of the Serbian nationalist movement in Bosnia, whom forces already control in an 80 percent of this former Yugoslav republic, have said they are prepared to exchange land in a peace settlement and allow Muslims to have their own state, which they call "a small Muslim state," surrounded by larger states for Croats

and Serbs. The plan that the Presidents of Croatia, Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman, have put forward would divide Bosnia into three ethnic states, one for each group, and that the Muslim Government have their own state. The plan would also allow for a "small Muslim state" to be established in the center of Bosnia, surrounded by larger states for Croats and Serbs.

Could War on

The plan would also allow for a "small Muslim state" to be established in the center of Bosnia, surrounded by larger states for Croats and Serbs. The plan would also allow for a "small Muslim state" to be established in the center of Bosnia, surrounded by larger states for Croats and Serbs.

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President Franjo Tudjman

SLOVENIA

4500

-500R-

INSIDE

↑ (31) 68% (the settlement)

JULY 18, 1993

Deny the Muslims Any State

ONR.



DNR

...of ...
...and prepared to ...

... what he described as the risk to Europe of allowing any Muslim state in ...
... The biggest concern for us is that any Muslim state can be a strong hold for Muslim terrorism in Europe.



19- Collaged image from the Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

siege, partially obscured by black paint. Despite the obscurity, discernible elements like the headline “Serbian Plan Would Deny the Muslims Any State” prompt reflection. Another collage displays a darkened map of Yugoslavia, with a warship illustration at its base. The central placement of Sarajevo amidst circles near the ship drawing creates a thought-provoking composition. [19]

In these collages, Woods intentionally manipulates images, text, and drawings to interlace his thematic elements. His collages, both through cut-and-paste and drawing techniques, engage directly with the war-ravaged city and invite viewers to think. These collages not only serve as an extension of his drawn narrative but also leverage the ‘reality’ and ‘provocation’ intrinsic to collage as a medium. By incorporating fragments into his envisioned world, Woods creates a dialogue that transcends the mere visual and extends into the realm of socio-political awakening. These fragments, though not directly integrated into the drawings, form a dialectical dynamic, enriching the overall narrative.

Sequential scenes

Woods organised his collection of drawings and collages, which were crafted for the Sarajevo Project, and compiled them into a comprehensive volume titled *Radical Reconstruction*. Through this publication, Woods presented his conceptual journey for the Sarajevo Project in a manner reminiscent of a series of cinematic narratives. He created the imaginative constructs of the architectural spaces through his illustrative drawings, related this imaginative realm to reality by using war-related fragments in his collages, and then arranged them to emphasise the interconnectedness of these visual elements. This systematic arrangement allowed for a transition between the images, enabling a holistic appreciation of the fragmented components when viewed collectively. In other words, in order to present the entirety of the Sarajevo project, Woods orchestrated a final presentation in which images flow harmoniously, creating a coherent narrative sequence.

In the book, the graphic design of which was done by Woods himself, this project is presented in a unique order. It recalls a storyboard, zooming into specific scenes and providing a closer look that might be intended to shock spectators not to miss the details they saw in previous pages. The lens of the architect moves back and forth as the perspectival drawings jump between the human scale of private spaces to the enormous architectural fabric and then zoom out to reflect the entire city landscape and even the whole world. The constructed scenario is juxtaposed with images of various scales that express representational gaps and allow for the intervention of the viewer’s imagination. As the pages are slowly turned, a collage is created between the various dimensions, between the human scale and the texture of the building, and between the scale of the city and the entire universe. Political collages, photographs and notes appear in unexpected places among the images, like breaking news, and send provocative messages. Throughout the pages, paintings, collages, photographs, notes and architecture are combined into a cinematic whole. [20]

Woods also employs this technique to transform the viewer into an active participant.



20- The Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993

He uses the “power of suggestion” that cinema possesses.¹¹⁰ By purposefully arranging his created images in a specific sequence, Woods leverages the inherent dynamism within these images, envisioning the potential for movement between them.¹¹¹ Despite gaps and disconnections between images, their collective presence conjures an illusion of continuity and unity - albeit not intrinsically present. This unity, in turn, encourages the viewer to become active participants, filling these gaps with their imagination. The narrative that Woods constructs through his sequential arrangement of scenes and collages only achieves full realisation when observed, continually reshaped with each viewing, uniquely tailored to the perspective of each viewer. In other words, this technique echoes the notion of montage: a composition of scenes culminating in a unified whole.

110 Woods, *Slow Manifesto* : *Lebbeus Woods Blog*, 176.

111 Woods, 176.

These scenes, interspersed with gaps, invite viewer participation, encouraging them to shape the narrative using their own creative faculties.

The juxtaposition of Woods' static architectural portrayals with the dynamic, experiential quality they attain upon assimilation resonates with a concept explored by Soviet filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein. In his 1938 essay "Montage and Architecture," Eisenstein delves into the interplay between moving image and architecture, drawing parallels to the Acropolis of Athens as an enduring cinematic entity.¹¹² He establishes a direct connection between architectural experience and montage, urging designers to adopt a filmmaker's perspective when approaching architecture. Eisenstein posits that 'the true image of montage' materialises when individual components coexist harmoniously, culminating in a comprehensive arrangement. According to him, "Each shield, in itself, means nothing. Viewed in isolation, it is dumb...The pictures, the phases, the elements of the whole are innocent and indecipherable. The blow is struck only when the elements are juxtaposed into a sequential image".¹¹³ This notion aligns with Woods' work, as his architectural scenarios - when placed in juxtaposition - converge to create a multifaceted representation while simultaneously offering a level surface to unite disparate fragments of architectural conception. Notably, Eisenstein emphasises the viewer's role in this cinematic interaction, positioning them as active participants. He contends that the composition's entirety only comes to fruition through the audience's movement within the space. This aligns with Woods' approach, suggesting that his chosen presentation format facilitates a holistic understanding of the Sarajevo project while affording viewers an opportunity to find their place within this multifaceted perception.

Woods' representational methods for contested space

Lebbeus Woods' representational techniques for the Sarajevo Project exemplify the potential intersection of art, architecture, and critique. Through the use of paper, imagery, and narrative sequencing, Woods transcended the conventional boundaries of architectural representation. Referring to architecture in contested spaces, he created an alternative world with his fragmented drawings, linking this imaginary world to the reality of conflict through his collages, assembling them in a sequence, allowing the viewer to become part of this process. In other words, his drawings, collages, and sequential arrangements became more than just visual aids. They transformed into immersive mediums communicating complex ideas, emotions, and possibilities.

Moreover, Woods illustrated the possibility of an alternative architectural perspective in contested spaces. The drawings, collages, and sequential arrangements transcended their visual functionality, becoming immersive conduits for communicating complex emotions, concepts, and potentialities. By interweaving potent war-related fragments with architectural propositions, Woods used the potential of collage to compel viewers to confront the dualities of conflict and transformation. His distinct visual language expanded the boundaries of traditional architectural representation, effectively illustrating architectural

112 Sergei M Eisenstein, "Montage and Architecture", *Assemblage*, no. 10 (1989): 111–31.

113 Eisenstein.

visions and aspirations. Woods recognised the inherent potential residing within the gaps of collage, montage, and assemblage. These interstices, in his view, represented points of potential intervention. Within these spaces, he fostered interactions with his audience, transforming the presentation into a realm of engagement, discussion, and dialogue. He invited active viewer participation, fostering a dialogue between the presented visual elements and the individual imagination of each observer. This participatory dimension amplified the resonance of his work, echoing Eisenstein's concept of montage, wherein the summation of visual elements coalesces into a unified and dynamic whole.

André Bazin, a film theorist, notes that “the cinema not only far from compromising or destroying the true nature of another art, is, on the contrary, in the process of saving it, of bringing it to general attention”.¹¹⁴ Although he discussed the interplay between cinema and painting, his argument extends to other art forms. In a similar vein, considering Woods' methodology, the execution of the Sarajevo project unfolds akin to an evolving film script. This cinematic scenario empowers architectural imagination, propelling it into broader public interest through the universal language of visuals. While recording the physical reality caused by the war, on the one hand, it also has the capacity to reflect the vision of the architectural imagination on the reality that has not yet come true and perhaps will never happen. Therefore, Woods' work embodies not merely a progressing project but also a projection of architecture - a mobile architecture that positions itself within a dynamic environment, envisioning, describing, and transforming the world through its unique perspective.

Theorisation of collage in contested spaces

This part underscores that collage and contested space can be conceptually intrinsically linked, albeit in contrasting ways. Collage embodies a fluid and open process, a fusion of differences into a composition. This adaptability, as evidenced by the historical evolution of collage, enables it to navigate the challenges of various eras. In contested spaces, the city itself emerges as the subject against which the dialogues unfold. The dialogue-driven nature of these situations further emphasises the specialised nature of contested spaces, each addressing unique issues through context-specific solutions. Collage can offer an alternative space within this contested city. Through this potential, it challenges the boundaries and conventions that govern contested spaces. While it acknowledges the limitations of contested spaces, collage refuses to be confined by them. Its innate capacity to accommodate multiplicity, spanning images, interrelationships, and the agency of creators and viewers generates an alternate realm within which conflicting elements can coexist.

The study of Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project provides a theoretical basis for understanding the potential of this technique in contested spaces. Woods employs architecture as a medium for reimagining Sarajevo. His work offers a fragmented interpretation of the city, interwoven with architectural concepts. These visual representations unveil the process

114 André Bazin, “Painting and Cinema”, in *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

of healing a damaged city, mirroring the layered nature of Sarajevo through his drawings. Woods' innovative application bridges the chasm between reality and imagination, inviting viewers to partake in a mental montage.

In design-based research, the practitioner's quest for expression drives the evolution of creative processes and their manifestation in tangible artefacts. Expression, as a dynamic force, manifests across multiple dimensions - the designer's mind, the creative process, the artefact, and the viewers' engagement. This interplay, however, is notably influenced by the reality of contested spaces. The adaptation of creative practices to these spaces becomes apparent, exemplified by the siege of Sarajevo. Throughout the siege, artists and architects employed their creative practices as a means of documenting the city's situation and establishing communication with the global community. This phenomenon underscores the adaptability of artistic practices in response to challenging circumstances, revealing that approaches can be tailored to suit the prevailing context. The focus on Lebbeus Woods is illuminating. Woods' involvement in Sarajevo and his use of collage, montage, and assemblage offer valuable insights that not only enrich the conceptual framework of this study but also serve as a guiding influence on the creative process.

Woods' work resonates with my own practice. The next chapter describes that practice and the process that has developed in relation to it. It shows the possible connection between collage and contested spaces by testing the potential of collage in the divided capital of Cyprus, Nicosia.

PART II

Collaging Nicosia: Insights from collage-making

Part II of this research delves into the practical application of my research, focusing on my creative practice within architectural research. Through collage, I seek to illuminate the manifold potentialities of practice in contested spaces. This part unfolds as a journey comprised of five distinct chapters, each serving a crucial purpose in my exploration.

In this column, alongside the visual documentation of my collage experiments, I also share my diary reflections. Here, I will reflect upon both the evolution of my collage-making process and the thoughts and emotions that accompanied it.

Part I of the research set-out a theoretical framework to explore my creative practice within contested spaces. The first chapter defined key terms: collage; contested spaces; and agency; and discussed their interrelation. It emphasised collage's development beyond art into a multidisciplinary tool, and highlighted contested spaces as complex environments of cultural and power interplay. The concept of agency was introduced as crucial in understanding how collage can transform perceptions of these spaces. The second chapter focused on Sarajevo during the Bosnian War, using it as a case study to examine how artists and architects have responded creatively to the challenges of war. This included an analysis of Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project, which explored innovative architectural techniques like montage and collage in reconstructing war-affected cities. This part set the stage for exploring my own creative practice within such environments, without delving into personal experiences but providing a theoretical background for the practical explorations in Part II.

Following the theoretical explorations in Part I, Part II shifts to a more personal and practical focus, centred on my own research practice in the context of contested spaces. This part introduces collage not just as an artistic tool but as a methodological approach for engaging with, and understanding, contested spaces informed by my experiences in Nicosia. It is structured around a five-stage process of collage-making. Each stage represents a different aspect of engaging with these spaces. And each contributes to the development of my own practice. This process begins with exploring Nicosia's complex past, moves through examining the texture of the city's division, understanding peace-making operations, culminating in my own collage project within the Buffer Zone, and the creation of dialogical spaces. These stages are not only sequential but also reflective, with each informing and initiating the next. The different techniques of collage-making are adapted across different series of collages, demonstrating an evolution in methodology and practice. This part of the thesis thus presents a journey through these stages, reflecting my progression and the dynamic nature of collage as a research tool in contested spaces.

The first chapter of part II, numbered Chapter 3, delves into the historical background of Nicosia, setting the stage for subsequent research endeavours in the context of contested spaces. This chapter employs collage as a lens to comprehend the intricate tapestry of a city shaped by many historical narratives. As introduced above, Nicosia is a city with a rich and multifaceted history, which embodies complexities arising from a convergence of diverse communities, epochs of colonisation, and anti-colonial movements. This chapter seeks to unravel these layers through the evocative medium of collage, offering a collagist's perspective on pivotal historical junctures. Furthermore, it is worth noting that collages not only describe but also offer

alternative interpretations, accommodating a multiplicity of perspectives that coalesce within societies that inherently host diverse readings of their past.

Chapter 4 extends the focus to an exploration of the impact of conflict on the city's texture. This examination, rooted in an understanding of the city's conflict history, seeks to provide insight into its transformation. Nicosia's historical narrative is marked by stratification and division, giving rise to migrations establishing a Buffer Zone under the aegis of the United Nations. Through a series of collages, this chapter traces the contours of these transformative events, offering diverse narratives that mirror the shifting identity and fabric of Nicosia. These collages, ranging from panoramic to microscopic perspectives, imbue the city's character with visual narratives, fostering a deeper understanding through the prism of collage.

Before delving into my personal collage experience in Nicosia, Chapter 5, examines the peacekeeping operations that have shaped the city. Nicosia's diverse communities coexist, often through parallel lives, prompting collective efforts towards unity. This journey traces the origins of peacebuilding endeavours to a shared responsibility for cohabiting around particular endeavours across the same island. Beginning with a collaborative approach to a sewage issue, perceived as a potential catalyst for peacebuilding, initiatives evolved into place-making and, ultimately, heritage building. The chapter delves into specific projects, including the sewerage system endeavour, the Nicosia Master Plan, and the New Vision. A collage analysis of these peacebuilding projects uncovers their common aspiration: a unified, non-politicised Nicosia. However, despite these admirable intentions on paper, none achieved the objective. The collage-making process considers an alternative perspective, reimagining analytical thinking within peace-building initiatives. While the city bears physical and ideological borders, collage defies the limitations imposed by these divisions. It acknowledges their existence yet proposes a political environment in contrast to the previously-advocated non-political context. This chapter introduces an alternative mode of operation within a contested city, offering the infrastructure to present my interpretation of Nicosia freely from an outsider's perspective.

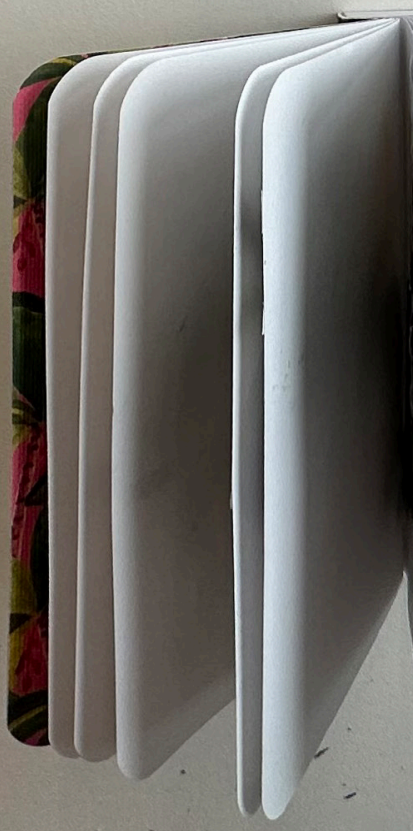
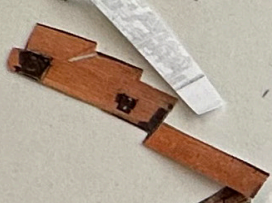
Chapter 6 illustrates a distinctive fusion of collage and Nicosia, encapsulating my collage-making process. In this unconventional architectural work, space transcends its traditional constraints, becoming a dynamic medium of expression through collage. Collage emerges as an alternative way of thinking and engagement within this contested sphere. The collage focus of this chapter turns towards the Buffer Zone, an emblem of division and, simultaneously, a potential locus for the harmonious cohabitation of two communities. After elucidating these facets, the chapter navigates the concept of alternative space and how collage can potentially help to breathe

life into such an environment. A singular collage work emerges from this process, a testament to the potential for alternative space within Nicosia. Integrating elements from previous stages while introducing new techniques, this work envisions a transformed trajectory for the city. It underscores the profound possibilities that collage-making can unlock within the Buffer Zone, conceptualising it as a repository of the divided city's potentialities.

The last chapter of this part, Chapter 7, concerning the exhibition introduced above, serves as a pivotal culmination of the collage-making journey. It provides a platform where collages from preceding chapters converge, engaging the viewer in a dialogue with the created works. This unique juncture not only encourages a dynamic interchange between the observer and the collages but also explores the intricate process of on-site, site-specific collage-making. Within this test site, collages transcend being mere artefacts. Instead, they emerge as conduits for communication. Through this dialogue, broader conversations about Nicosia and the potential of collage as a transformative agent are fostered. As these exchanges unfold, they not only challenge my interpretation of the city in relation to its situation and future potential but also highlight the capacity of collage to shape a particular space.

As a result, this second part of the thesis elucidates the dynamic interplay between my practice as a collagist-researcher, and the evolving collage works. In other words, I and my works illustrate a practice-based approach to architectural research. My work builds upon foundations established by the work of Lebbeus Woods and others in Sarajevo in the 1990s. Through a series of collage experiments introduced in these chapters, I embark on a journey through Nicosia's intricate history, layered urban fabric, nuanced peacekeeping initiatives, the transformative potential of the Buffer Zone, and the dialogical potential of collage in contested spaces.

Each chapter stands as a testament to the transformative potential of collage, showcasing its capacity to transcend conventional boundaries and engage with contested spaces in an evocative, thought-provoking manner. As I venture into the heart of Nicosia, the collision of history, culture, and conflict converge in a vivid tapestry of collaged narratives. These chapters collectively form a vivid mosaic, a testament to the potential of collage as a medium to illuminate the complexities of contested spaces, trying to with towards a vision of a harmonious, reimagined future for this city.





1 - Collage-making table

Chapter 3

Engaging with the Contested Past

Descriptive collages

This chapter opens with the following question, as introduced above:

How can collage serve as a means to engage with the intricate history of a contested past?

This investigation leads me to explore and interpret the intricate history of Cyprus, a history that has not only shaped Nicosia's identity but also contributed to its enduring division through the art of collage-making.

Within this historical tapestry, there are multiple perspectives of various stakeholders - Greek Cypriots, Greeks, Turks, Turkish Cypriots, and the British - each offering their own rendition of events. As I traverse key historical junctures, I simultaneously explore these divergent narratives. Collage, as a creative practice, inherently embraces plurality. It endows its beholder with the freedom to interpret from their unique vantage point. However, this open-mindedness, while liberating, also invites scrutiny and critique.

The history of Nicosia is punctuated by the imprint of colonisation, anti-colonisation, post-colonial instability, the fractious impacts of ethnic nationalism, internal conflicts within and between ethnic groups, disputes, incursions, territorial delineations, and the displacement of populations. These intricate threads have interwoven to give rise to the multifaceted 'Cyprus Problem'. This predicament, unresolved, encapsulates myriad moments and concepts emblematic of the conflict woven into Cyprus' historical strata. In this chapter, it is through the assemblage of these key moments and concepts that I embark on the construction of collages, using them as a medium to probe Cyprus's contested past. In this chapter, my practice-based research methodology entails a dual analysis encompassing both Nicosia and the act of collage-making. This endeavour aims to gain a deep insight into the lived experience of the city.

What is Cyprus? An island lying in the north-east corner of the Levant; the key of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. These things are written on a map. At all times she [sic] has been what she is now – the watch-tower and the outwork of two continents. A race advancing on the East must start with Cyprus. Alexander, Augustus, Richard, and Saint Louis took that line. A race advancing on the West must start with Cyprus. Sargon, Ptolemy, Cyrus, Haroun-al-Rashid took this line. When Egypt and Syria were of first-rate value to the West, Cyprus was of first-rate value to the West. Genoa and Venice, struggling for the trade of India, fought for Cyprus and enjoyed supremacy in the land by turns. After a new route by sea was found to India, Egypt, and Syria declined in value to the Western Nations. Cyprus was then forgotten; but the opening of the Suez Canal has suddenly restored her to her ancient pride of place.¹

In his book *British Cyprus*, characterised by outdated views and assumptions, nineteenth-century historian and traveller William Hepworth Dixon provides a vivid description of Cyprus, and a characterisation of its layered and turbulent past. As Dixon notes, the island possesses a significant geostrategic position, situated as it is between the West and East and occupying a location within the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea.² The island has long been home to diverse societies and has existed on the margins of various constructs of 'other.' This unique position has permitted the island to remain in a state of in-between, belonging to nothing entirely. Here, I will not present a complete history of Cyprus but rather a collagist's perspective on its pivotal historical junctures. To fully comprehend the historical and social factors that led to the division in Nicosia, what follows will provide a brief historical context that outlines the development of the ongoing dispute in Cyprus and the evolution of the competing nationalisms that constitute its foundation.

This chapter thus seeks to understand how the conflict was constructed first in political discourse and then in wider society, and then furthermore as a physical boundary within the city's territory. Drawing on the work of historians and anthropologists as well as my own collage-making experience, what follows is based on an understanding of the partition in Cyprus - not as a means to end ethnic violence, but as a process of collective decision-making as well as space-making that developed in a specific historical conjuncture involving international and local actors.

A sequence of collages follows this introduction, beginning with an overview of the island's history, starting with the Ottoman Empire and the administration of Cyprus under British rule. The 1960 Treaties and the island's independence process are then covered. In the last part of this section, the events after 1963 - the Enosis movement that aimed to unify

1 W.Hepworth Dixon, *British Cyprus* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879), 9–10.

2 Dixon, *British Cyprus*.

Cyprus with Greece while opposing British rule; the 1974 intervention; the permanent partition of the island; the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the accession process to the European Union - are discussed. Additionally, the chapter emphasises how the heterogeneous texture of Nicosia's cultural, political, social, and stratified spatial composition evolved and transformed during the conflict.

This chapter employs a tripartite narrative structure to explore the historical context of Cyprus through the medium of collage. The primary narrative presents an exploration of historical events and developments, serving as the foundation of the research. This is complemented by two additional perspectives: my collage-diary voice, and my reflective interpretation of the collage-making process.

The second collage-diary voice, presented in a green font within the margins, offers real-time insights and reflections recorded during my collage creation. This diary voice provides a personal and temporal dimension to the narrative and also serves as an explanation of the collage-making process, bridging the gap between historical events and their artistic representation in practice-based research.

The third element of the narrative, my interpretive voice, follows the main historical exposition. It attempts an analysis of the collages, weaving-in theoretical perspectives and critical questioning of the collage-making process in relation to the research findings. This layered approach not only facilitates a multifaceted understanding of historical events but also allows for a critical examination of the role of creative practice in historical research.

The integration of visual elements - the collages themselves - occurs in parallel, offering a visual synthesis of the historical narrative, personal diary entries, and analytical reflections. This format is offered to engage readers in a multidimensional exploration of history, combining academic research with creative expression to provide a holistic understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of Cyprus's history.

A brief history of 'the Cyprus Problem' through collages

As already noted, Cyprus' historical narrative spans millennia, encapsulating a succession of dominions from 3000 BC to 1571, and a diverse array of empires and kingdoms, including the Egyptians, Hittites, Achaeans, Dorians, Greeks (with affiliate colonies), Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Alexander the Great, Romans, Arabs, Byzantines, British, Genoese, Mamluks, and Venetians.³

The origins of Cyprus' conflict date back to AD 395, when the island was under the auspices of the Roman Empire. Following the AD 395 schism of the Roman Empire, Cyprus emerged as an autonomous entity distinct from Greece, falling within the domain of the Byzantine Empire. This association forged a shared identity among select denizens of Cyprus and ancient Greece, grounded in their adherence to Orthodox Christianity. Nevertheless, the Byzantine Empire officially acknowledged the autonomy of the Church of Cyprus in AD 488. This proclamation, coupled with the declaration of Greek as the official language, initiated a process whereby inhabitants embraced a Hellenistic identity, notwithstanding their non-Greek ethnic origins.⁴

After AD 632, the island faced a series of unsuccessful invasions before being annexed by British King Richard I in 1191.⁵ However, none of these invasions lasted permanently on the island. Although the Lusignan ruled the island until 1489, there were periods when the Genoese also partially controlled the island. During this time, the Mamluks were also influential in some parts of the island, leaving Islamic artefacts. From 1432, Venetian influence strongly affected the island until its conquest by the Ottoman Empire in 1571.⁶ Therefore, it merits emphasis that Cyprus' historical trajectory is marked by subjugation to a diverse array of regional powers, accompanied by migrations emanating from both the Eastern and Western Roman Empires. This mosaic of historical influences engendered a complex, multi-ethnic social fabric on the island. Those migrating from Anatolia, Syria, the Aegean, Western Rome, and even Africa enriched this social tableau, leaving an indelible imprint on the built environment.

Following the Venetians' defeat by the Ottomans in 1571, Cyprus entered a 307-year phase as an Ottoman province. This marked the start of a wave of Anatolian immigrants to the island, resulting in an increase in the Turkish population.⁷ Ozmen, in his research on the Origin and Socio-

3 Muge Vatansever, "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelişimi", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 12 (2010): 1487–1530.

4 Vatansever.

5 Ibid.

6 Nuri Cevikel, *Kıbrıs Eyaleti : Yönetim, Kilise, Ayan ve Halk: 1750-1800: Bir Dönem* (Gazimagusa: Dogu Akdeniz Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2000), 15–16.

7 Suleyman Ozmen and Seher Selin Ozmen, "Kıbrıs Türklerinin Kökeni ve Sosyo-Kültürel Özellikleri," *Kıbrıs Araştırmaları ve İnceleme Dergisi* 2, no. 3 (2018): 21–33.

Cultural Characteristics of the Turks of Cyprus, also notes this as the origin of the Turkish people in Cyprus.⁸ Beyond demographic shifts, the Ottomans introduced their own governance systems, leaving their cultural imprint. They implemented their own urban planning strategies, created public works projects, and managed administrative tasks according to their rules.⁹ This resulted in the construction of various structures such as bridges, inns, mosques, baths, roads, and waterways on the island.

In the early 19th century, with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, various social, economic, and nationalistic issues arose in the regions under its dominion, including Cyprus. The emergence of Greek nationalism on the island gave rise to more severe racial tensions, with many Greek Cypriots embracing the idea of a 'Greater Greece' encompassing Cyprus. The Greek War of Independence, initiated in 1821, acted as a catalyst, with the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus playing a pivotal role in mobilising nationalist sentiment in the pursuit of the 'Megali Idea'.¹⁰ Derived from the Greek words "*megas*" (great) and "*idea*" (idea or concept), the Megali Idea, or in other words, the Great Idea, represented a vision of an expanded Greek state encompassing areas populated by Greeks.¹¹ This vision was not just a geopolitical aspiration but also a significant political and cultural movement, aiming to augment Greek nationalism, identity, and influence across the Balkans and beyond.¹² This insurrection was a critical event, marking a significant disruption of Ottoman dominance in Cyprus.

During the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, the Ottoman Empire, to secure the support of England, leased Cyprus to Britain and left the administration of the island under the control of the British. The subsequent annexation by Britain in 1914, codified in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the royal decree of King George V in 1925, crystallised Cyprus as a British Crown Colony, a status maintained until its attainment of independence in 1960.¹³ This epoch of British sovereignty represented a transformative layer in Cyprus' historical continuum, instigating substantive alterations in its political, cultural, and social paradigms. The introduction of novel institutions, legal frameworks, and administrative apparatuses, coupled with the enduring military presence evinced by extant British bases, indelibly marked the island.

8 Ozmen and Ozmen.

9 Vatansever, "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelişimi."

10 Vatansever.

11 Sebahattin İsmail, *150 Soruda Kıbrıs Sorunu* (Istanbul: Kastast Yayınları, 1998), 3.

12 This ideal envisaged the extension of the border of the Greek state to include all the Greek subjects, such as Greece, Istanbul, Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus, Anatolia, and the territories up to Alexandria, where Alexander the Great was to be invaded, a kind of revitalisation of Byzantine Empire, which can be considered as a Great Hellenic Empire.

13 Vatansever, "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelişimi."

The pivotal transition from Ottoman to British rule in 1925 not only restructured administrative systems but also left profound and enduring cultural and social legacies, still evident today. Visual exploration of this era, through artefacts such as maps, flags, coins, and other imagery, provides tangible evidence of this significant power shift, offering a compelling window into history.

To comprehend the dynamics of this transition from one protectorate to another, I attempted to make a sequence of collages using period-specific materials. These explored how those in power projected their dominance visually. Images encountered preliminary this research, seemingly unrelated yet belonging to a shared domain, were evocative. The Arabic script on the map of Cyprus juxtaposed with Queen Victoria's image on coins and the contrasting symbols of the Ottoman Empire and the Royal Government of the United Kingdom signify a poignant clash between two opposing powers, not just militarily but also culturally and socially. The collaged image itself encapsulates this irony, with the sultan and the queen each asserting their presence, centred around the island. Arabic letters symbolise the Ottoman Empire, while coins bearing Queen Victoria's image blanket the surface. This composition serves as an interpretation of the moment when these two disparate powers briefly converged on the island, leaving a lasting impact on its history and identity.¹⁴ [1]

During the period of British rule, the notion of *enosis*,¹⁵ which sought to unite Cyprus with Greece in alignment with the '*megali idea*' of the Greek population, gained prominence on the island. This idealism not only led to an uprising against the Turkish Cypriots but also incited a rebellion against the non-Greek inhabitants of the island and the British governing administration. The Greek government supported this notion, using the island as a political tool to foment unrest. In 1928, Greece formally requested the annexation of Cyprus from Britain, Russia, and France. However, due to a shift in Britain's Middle East policy, their stance towards the Greek population on the island changed, marking the onset of challenges. One of the earliest significant disputes between the British administration and the Greek Cypriot community arose in 1931 regarding the perceived discriminatory and unjust British tax system. In protest, the Greeks set fire to the mansion of the British Governor of Cyprus. This action sparked widespread demonstrations and strikes, leading the British authorities to respond with force, resulting in violent clashes.¹⁶

14 - From my research diary on 5 May 2021.

For my first collage in the series, I focus on the British and Ottoman influence on the island. My initial research reminded me of what I learned in secondary school about the relationship between Cyprus and the Ottoman Empire, which began in 1571 and ended with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This period marked the beginning of England's rise as a world power, ultimately leading to its presence on the island. I could hear my secondary school teacher's voice in my ears, saying, 'The island became a pawn in a power struggle.' But what did these words really mean? How could the island transition from the protection of one power to another? And how could this shift in power be represented through the image of a person?

As I sifted through the images I had collected, I noticed a common thread in the way both Ottoman and British powers were expressed: through the image of a singular person, such as a sultan, king, or queen. This portrayal of the empire or kingdom is not something

I am familiar with in my current time period, but it was intriguing to explore how it was depicted in the past.

Additionally, I noted that wherever Britain extended its influence, it adapted its flag to the region, integrating its own colours and symbols directly. But were these methods effective in embedding Britain's identity on the island and ensuring its legacy?

Despite feeling uncertain about how to visually express the changing balance of power in my collage, I began by combining a map of Cyprus, a fragment symbolising the United Kingdom, and images of the Sultan and Queen of the time. Although the process and outcome of this collage did not meet my expectations, I believe it captures the shifting powers of the era in a fragmentary way.

15 Enosis is a Greek word that means "union" or "unification". In a political context, the term was used to define the aim of a group of Greek Cypriots, meaning the union of Greece and Cyprus.

16 Vatansever, "Kibris Sorununun Tarihi Gelisimi".

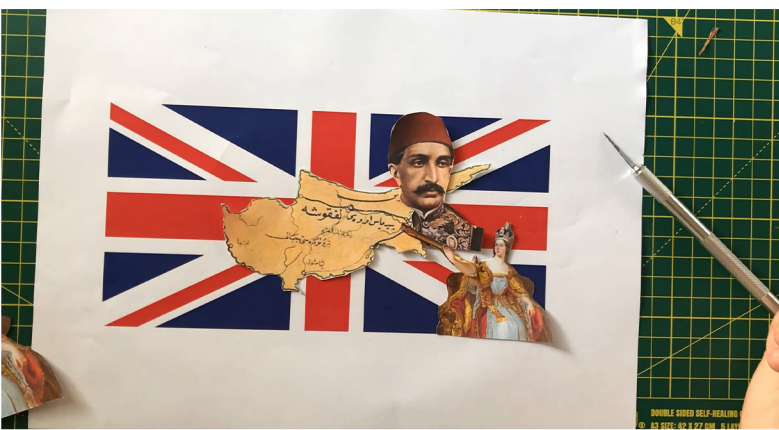
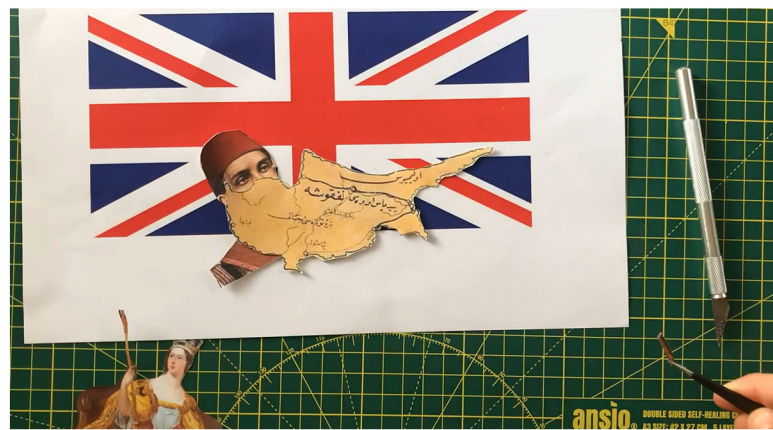
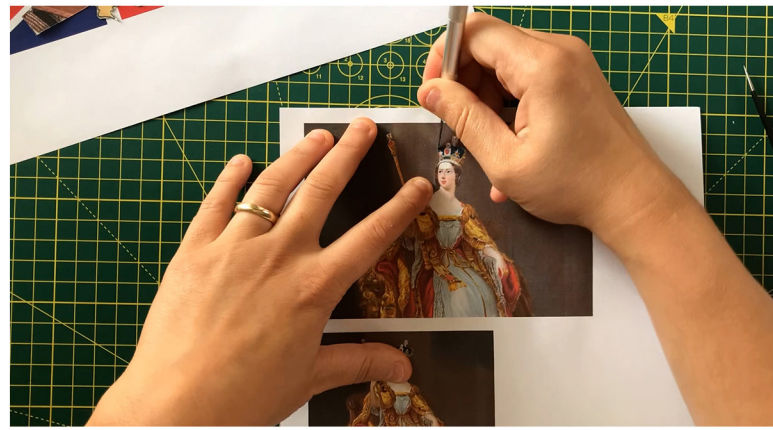
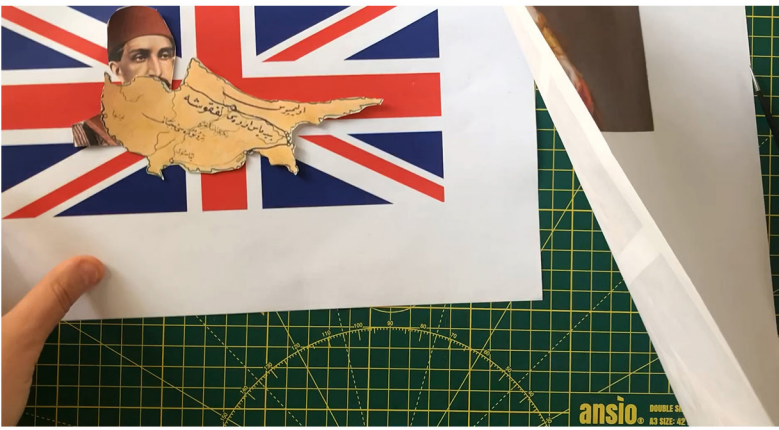


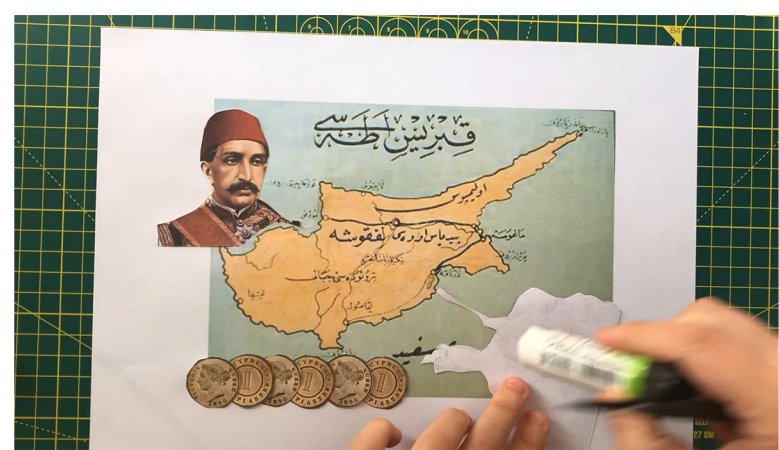
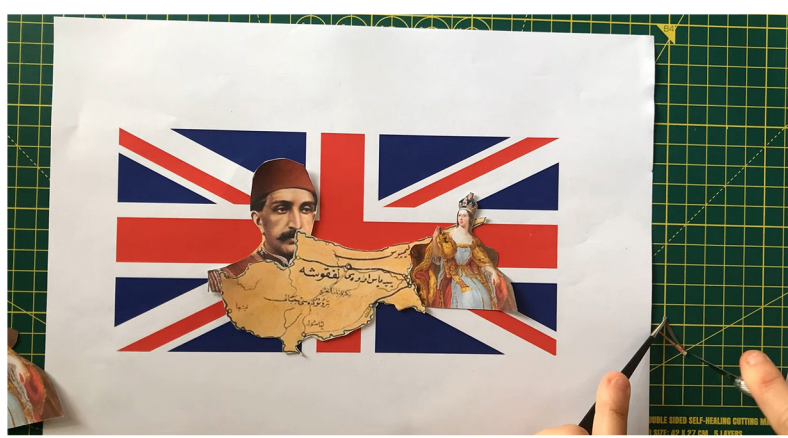
1 - Sultan and Queen Together

Following World War II, efforts for *enosis* gained momentum within Greece and among the Greek Cypriot population on the island. In 1947, the Greek Parliament demanded the incorporation of Cyprus into Greece, offering military zones on the island to both the United States and the United Kingdom as part of the deal. Subsequently, the Greek Cypriots appealed to the United Nations in 1949 in favour of *enosis* and began advocating for a plebiscite on the island's annexation with Greece. However, the intensification of the conflict adversely affected the position of Turkish Cypriots, who found themselves increasingly marginalised as a minority group on the island. In response, they sought assistance from Turkey, prompting various Turkish organisations to stage protests in Cyprus and Turkey in solidarity with their compatriots in Cyprus.¹⁷

These series of events that have unfolded on the island have led to a deep-seated partisanship, resulting in a profound social and cultural fragmentation. The notion of '*enosis*' has emerged as the predominant cover for this division and factionalism. Thus, understanding this notion is instrumental in unravelling the intricate

¹⁷ Ismail, *150 Soruda Kıbrıs Sorunu*.





historical complexities surrounding debates in Cyprus. While there may be disagreement about whether enosis is the pivotal moment in the island's history, a close examination of this concept can shed light on the issues at hand. Moreover, before delving into my research, I was familiar with the notion due to my Turkish background. I learned an idea of Cyprus's history as a part of the Republic of Turkey in history classes. The notion was about an aspiration for a Greater Greece encompassing Greece, Cyprus, the western regions of Turkey, and Istanbul. However, this understanding was rooted in academic learning, detached from tangible experience. Thus, I approached this collage project intending to distil this notion into a visually accessible definition of enosis.

In visual research, I encountered a multitude of maps and images depicting these regions unified under the Greek flag. Further investigation into enosis within the Cypriot context led me to news reports and images that fervently advocated for this concept, revealing it as a deeply held aspiration among Greek-speaking communities. Greek sources actively promoted this idea, while Turkish sources positioned it as a key catalyst for the Cyprus conflict. These images ranged from celebratory scenes to contentious depictions of war. Consequently, while making the collage, I focused on encapsulating this notion - the union of Greece and Cyprus. I amalgamated fragments of a map and a gathering of individuals proudly holding an enosis banner. [3]

Yet, upon reflection, I recognised that while this composition elucidates the concept of enosis, it could also be interpreted as a form of propaganda championing the notion of a Greater Greece. The figures in the collage exude contentment, and the map portrays the region as a unified nation. As a person of Turkish heritage, I grappled with a sense of unease, feeling a measure of complicity in endorsing an idea that conflicted with the interests of my own country. Nevertheless, I acknowledged that the terms provided by the history of the conflict in Cyprus require careful consideration and can be interpreted in multiple ways. The issue of enosis is just one of them.¹⁸

After the election of Makarios as Archbishop, a leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus, the movement for enosis in both Cyprus and Greece gained even stronger support. In 1955, the Greek Cypriot enosis movement escalated into an armed insurrection led by EOKA,¹⁹ led by George

19 E.O.K.A. (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston) - National Organization of Cypriot Fighters was the Greek Cypriot nationalist organisation founded by George Grivas in 1954. Its goal was to enosis through armed conflict. It carries out a series of guerrilla attacks against British colonial forces and Turkish Cypriots.

18- From my research diary on 5 May 2021.

I started this collage experiment by questioning: What is "enosis"?

I remembered it as a term from my history lessons, referring to the idea of a Greater Greece. This concept envisioned the unification of Greece, Cyprus, the western part of Turkey, and Istanbul (or should I say Constantinople) into one nation. The goal was to transform the Aegean into a Greek sea, gaining control over the Bosphorus and the Straits of Gallipoli.

As I continued my visual research, I discovered that Enosis became particularly entrenched following the British occupation of Cyprus. While Greek Cypriots struggled to tolerate the presence of other nationalities on the island, the British government's presence further complicated the situation. But what did enosis really mean? As a Turk, I was unsure how to approach this term.

For me, it represented an unattainable idea. However, for Greeks, it appeared to be a desirable future.

To delve deeper through my collage experiment, I conducted image research on 'Cyprus in the 1930s', 'enosis', 'Greater Greece', and 'the Union of Greece'. My goal was to capture the essence of this concept in my collage.

The final composition that emerged had a distinctly propagandistic feel. It featured a landscape with a bridge connecting lands. The collaged image depicted women and children crossing the bridge, carrying Greek flags and a banner reading 'Enosis'. This evoked a sense of guilt in me. I questioned myself: As a Turkish person, how could I advocate or visually represent an idea contrary to the interests of my country? Yet, it was a clear visual expression of the term, - I suppose.



3 - ENOSIS

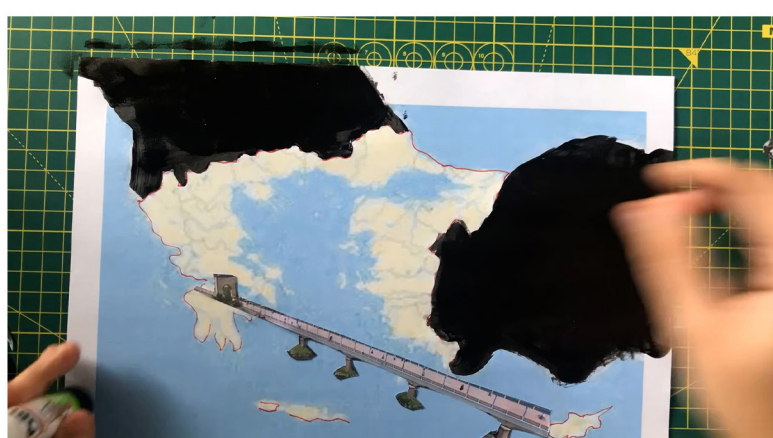
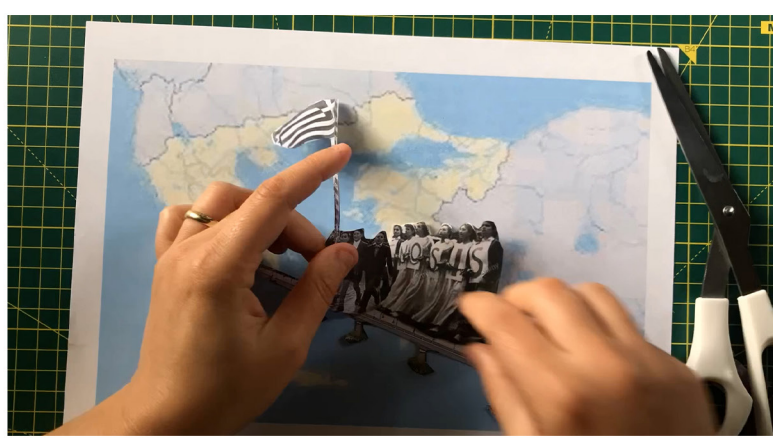
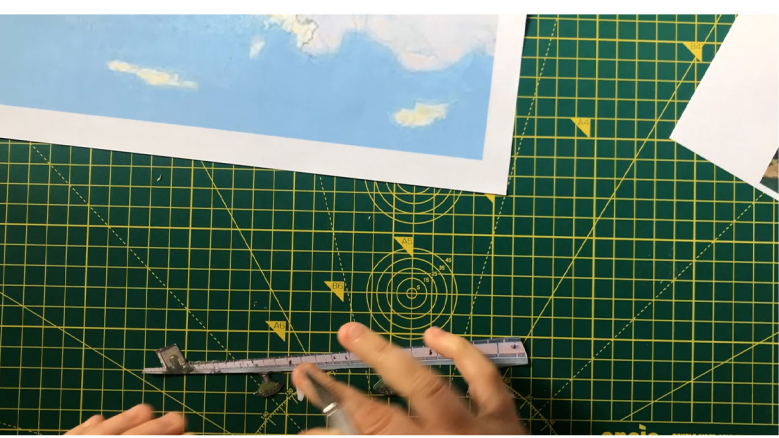
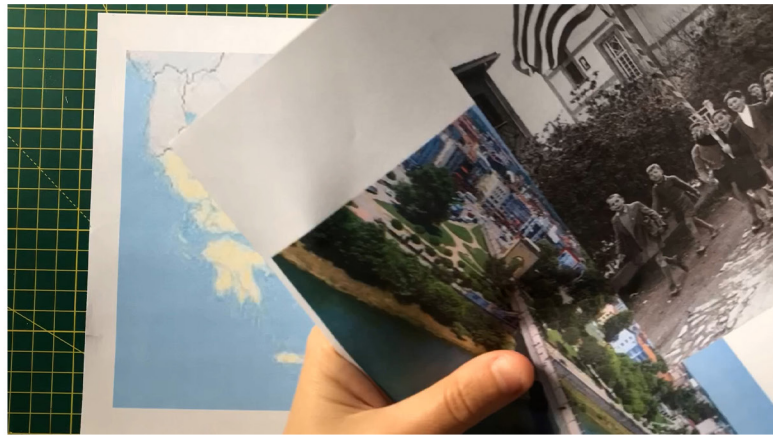
Grivas. Greece also became entangled in this issue, bringing the matter of *enosis* to the United Nations, adding new complexity to the situation on the international stage. However, this move was met with opposition from Turkey, which rejected the possibility of the island's union with Greece. Turkey emphasised their historical and cultural connections with Cyprus and the importance of its strategic location between the island and the mainland. Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, organised themselves in response to the violence directed against them. In 1958, they established their own armed organisation called TMT.²⁰ Initially, they preferred the continuation of British rule but later advocated for *Taksim*,²¹ representing the partition of the island.

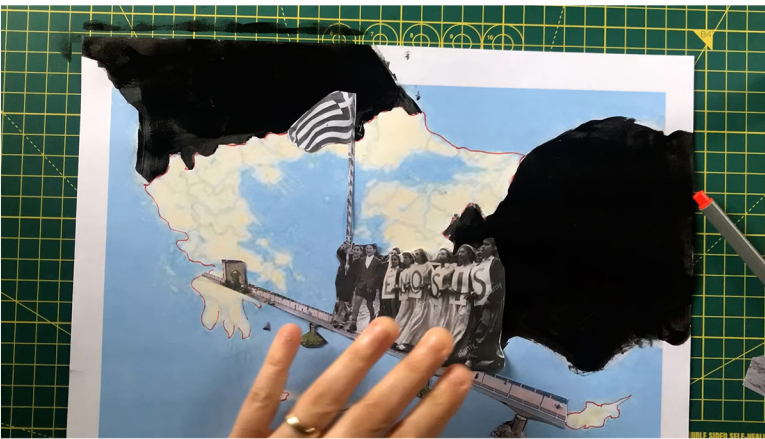
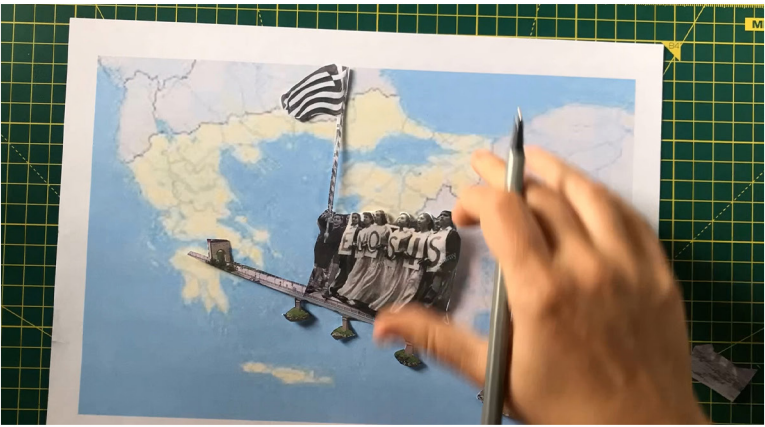
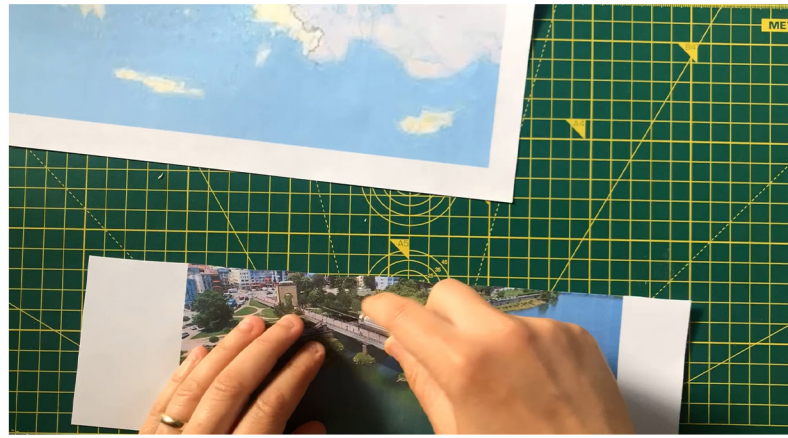
The conflicting objectives of the two primary ethnic groups, coupled with British policies exacerbating division, ultimately led to violent interethnic confrontations.²² Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly

20 T.M.T (Turk Mukavemet Teskilati) – Turkish Resistance Organisation was the Turkish Cypriot armed organisation founded by Rauf Denktas, President of the Federation of Turkish Cypriot Institutions, Dr. Burhan Nalbantoglu, President of the Turkish Cypriot High School Alumni Association, and Kemal Tanrisevdi, Consulate of Turkey officials in 1957 to ensure their own security against violence against Turkish Cypriots. Later this organisation supported by Turkish Army.

21 *Taksim* means division or partition in Turkish. It was proposed by Turkish Cypriots in the late 1950s as a response to *enosis*. The idea was that Cyprus would be divided into two distinct states, one Greek and one Turkish, with each community administering its own territory.

22 Yiannis Papadakis, Nicos Peristianis, and Gisela Welz, *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict*, *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict*, 2006, 2.





acknowledged the existence of the Cyprus problem but refrained from endorsing the island's self-determination in favour of Greece. However, this further intensified the power struggle on the island. Turkey supported the Turkish Cypriots, while Greece stood behind the Greek Cypriots, leading to greater international attention on the issue. Moreover, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the British government altered its approach to the island, moving away from its previous dominant stance. It opted to relinquish its dominant position on the island and establish an autonomous administration under its supervision. This decision prompted the development of several successive proposals, including the Lord Winster Proposal of 1947 for the Consultative Assembly, the Jackson Plan of 1948, the MacMillan Plan I of 1955, the Harding Plans I and II of 1955, the Radcliff Plan of 1956, the MacMillan Plan II of 1958, and the Spaak Plan of 1958. It is worth noting, however, that all these proposals aimed to maintain British sovereignty over the island and were therefore met with opposition from the Greek Cypriots, who sought Greek control over the island.²³

In the early 1950s, a global shift in power dynamics echoed on the island of Cyprus. While the prevailing narrative attributes the partition of Cyprus primarily to ethnic conflicts between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, it could be argued that the initial seeds of discord emerged from Greek Cypriot opposition to the British, who wielded paramount authority at the time. The waning influence of the British on the island bolstered the fervour for enosis, indirectly fuelling aspirations for Greek dominance and heightening turbulence across the island. This resistance movement is associated with the term EOKA. Understanding the reasons behind EOKA's resistance is important for the understanding of the still unresolved problems of Cyprus. To foster a deeper comprehension of this subject, I endeavoured a visual research exposition of EOKA.²⁴ [5]

Through visual exploration, it became evident that the term EOKA was closely entwined with its founder, George Grivas, and was often accompanied by imagery associated with military endeavours and conflict. The amalgamation of my personal background and images of warfare significantly influenced my approach to making this collage. Delving into Grivas' role as the instigator and leader of the militant faction EOKA in Cyprus confronted my own emotions and preconceptions, which markedly shaped the collage's composition. The cut-outs seemingly portray a propagandistic tableau of a unified group rallying behind a resolute leader, rebelling against British rule. This portrayal resonates with the situation in Cyprus at the time, when Grivas' militant faction sowed chaos, rendering

24 - From my research diary on 6 May 2021.

Although the division of the island between Turkish and Greek Cypriots may suggest that the conflict originated between these two groups, my research indicates that it was, in fact, the Greek Cypriots' opposition to the dominant British government in the 1950s that sparked the ongoing problems.

As my research progresses, I am particularly drawn to the figures of Archbishop Makarios and George Grivas. They represent (and still embody) powerful ideas and aspirations.

Exploring Grivas and his role as the founder and leader of the EOKA, a terrorist group in Cyprus, has forced me to confront my own emotions and prejudices. I found myself angered by the injustices and atrocities committed during this conflict. I struggled with the tension between my role as a researcher and my urge to express my feelings through collage.

Dissatisfied with my previous collages, I researched collagists such as John Heartfield and Hannah Höch, who represented significant events in history through their art. Consequently, I decided to attempt a collage inspired by the simple yet powerful style of Heartfield. In one of his works, Hitler is depicted with wings and a sword, appearing angelic yet poised to kill a white dove, symbolising peace.

Inspired by Heartfield, I endeavoured to create a collage that encapsulates the complexity and emotion of this chapter in Cyprus' history, reflecting my Turkish perspective! I gathered images of Grivas, flags, and various colours. In the final composition, Grivas stands on a British flag, defending his beliefs, with dramatic red wings behind him, resembling an angel yet seemingly prepared to kill a pigeon, mirroring Hitler in Heartfield's collage.

This, however, led me to question my identity as a collagist from a researcher's standpoint. Reflecting on this, I am left pondering whether my collage-making serves to further my own emotions and beliefs, or whether it genuinely aids in my understanding and grappling with the fragments of history I encounter. I suspect this interplay between emotion and objectivity will continue to influence my research as I move forward.

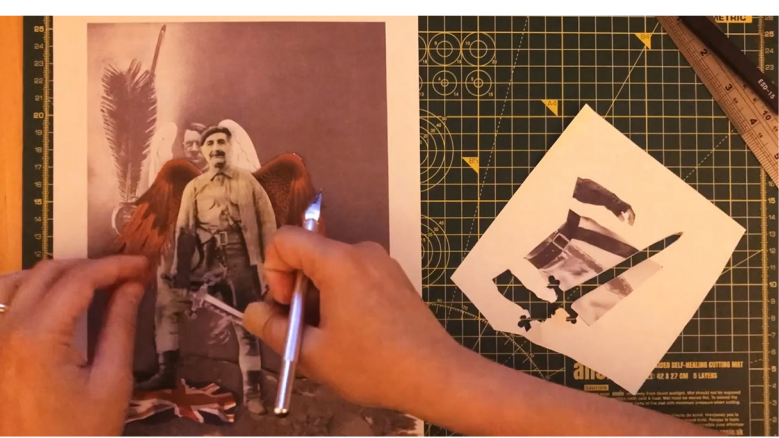
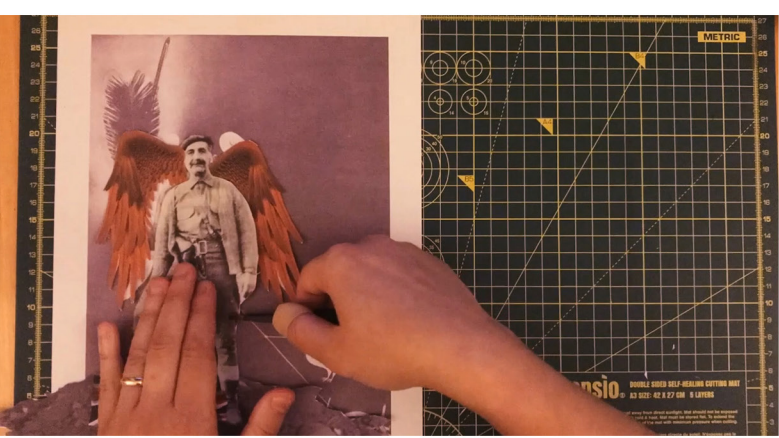
23 Hamza Eroglu, "Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyetini Yaratan Tarihi Süreci ve Son Gelismeler", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* 28, no. 54 (2002): 735–93.

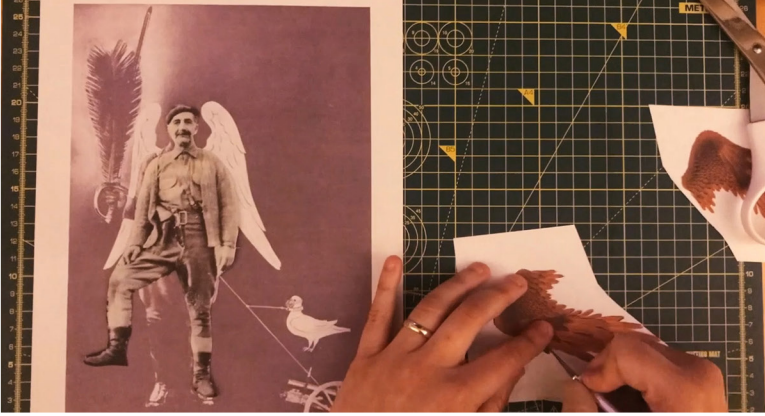


5 - Grivas' Enosis

life untenable for minority groups. However, certain elements within the collage may offer avenues for alternative interpretations, specifically more personal. Notably, the enigmatic presence of Hitler juxtaposed with the Grivas fragment may serve to challenge the conventional perception of Grivas' heroism. Nevertheless, the collage underscores that an understanding of this debate depends on an understanding of the terms involved, and collages provide a visual means of illuminating these terms.

The desire to unify Cyprus with Greece sparked disagreement with Turkey and Turkish Cypriots, who sought separate self-determination. Furthermore, Britain's strategic interests on the island played a pivotal role in negotiations, as it was unwilling to relinquish its rights. In 1955, the representatives from the three nations met in London for a conference. Turkey advocated for





the right of each community to determine its own future, implying support for distinct self-determination for each community, while Greece insisted on collective self-determination for the entire island. As the Greek Cypriots constituted the majority on the island, Greece's proposal was viewed as a potential pathway to *enosis*, a notion opposed by Turkey and Britain. Consequently, the conference concluded without significant progress.

Despite this initial setback, they found common ground and reached a compromise in subsequent negotiations held in Zürich and London in 1959. The three parties agreed on the principles of a partnership between the Greek and Turkish communities, as well as the guarantee of the agreed structure by Turkey, Britain, and Greece, leading to the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960.²⁵ However, the island's independence failed to satisfy the aspirations of both ethnic groups. Both groups exhibited perseverance in their pursuits of *enosis* and *taksim*. Moreover, the independence of the newly formed state came under scrutiny due to its dependence on the three guarantor states for assistance in its global endeavours. This situation was so pronounced that Cyprus became known as "the reluctant republic".²⁶ Shaped by the power struggle among the guarantor nations, the Republic of Cyprus proved short-lived. Just three years after gaining independence, interethnic violence erupted in Nicosia, subsequently spreading across the island.²⁷

The establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, despite its ultimate lack of success, holds significant historical importance. It is important to understand the circumstances surrounding this attempted independence and the intricate issues that plagued Cyprus. The Cyprus Problem extended beyond the island's communities, involving relations with other groups, resulting in a complex and paradoxical process. With both Greek and Turkish communities nurturing unfulfilled dreams of *enosis* and *taksim*, coupled with escalating ethnic tensions and geopolitical power dynamics, the already intractable Cyprus problem escalated, ultimately thwarting the island's quest for independence.²⁸

The multiplicity of voices on the island rendered true independence an unattainable goal, creating an environment bordering on the absurd. The island's bid for independence marked a pivotal, albeit contentious, moment in its history, providing the foundation for this collage. I aimed to visually articulate the discord arising from

28 - From my research diary on 6 May
2021

After reflecting on my previous collage, I decided to create a new one that commemorates the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. However, I find myself questioning the nature of this independence - wondering what kind of independence this really was. The 1959 agreements designated Britain, Greece, and Turkey as guarantors of the island, which raises the question: What does it mean for an independent country to have guarantors? Moreover, how could Britain retain sovereignty over 99 square meters of military base within the boundaries of this ostensibly independent state? These considerations led me to ponder whether this was, in fact, a pseudo-republic.

While exploring John Heartfield's collages, I was particularly inspired by 'Werkzeug in Gottes Hand? Spielzeug in Thyssens Hand!' (Tool in God's hand? Toy in Thyssen's hand!). In this collage, Thyssen, the manager of Germany's largest trust and appointed economic dictator of Rhineland-Westphalia, Germany's key industrial region, is depicted as manipulating Hitler like a puppet. For my experiment, I mirrored this concept by placing two figures playing with the same puppet, symbolising the complex nature of Cyprus' independence. As a nod to my previous work, I replaced the faces in the fragments with those painted in flag colours. Additionally, I included a third figure, the United Kingdom, subtly positioned behind Turkey and Greece as they manipulated the puppet of the Republic of Cyprus. To complete the page's background, I added a contemporaneous newspaper headline celebrating Cyprus's inception: 'THE REPUBLIC IS BORN'.

25 Bahadır Bumin Ozarlan, *Uluslararası Hukuk Açısından Kubris Sorunu ve Avrupa Birliği'nin Yaklaşımı* (Istanbul: IQ Kultur Sanat Yayıncılık, 2007), 27.

26 Stephanos G Xydes, *Cyprus: Reluctant Republic* (Mouton: The Hague, 1973).

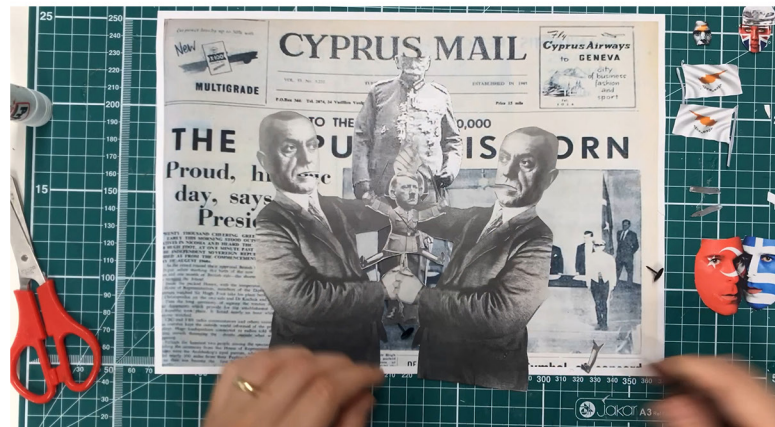
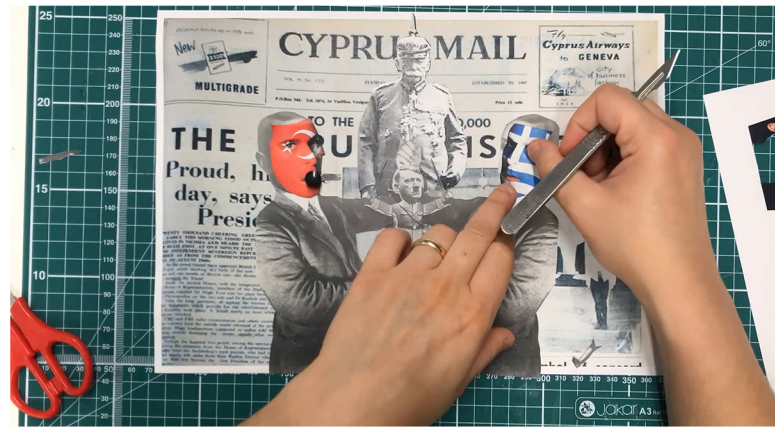
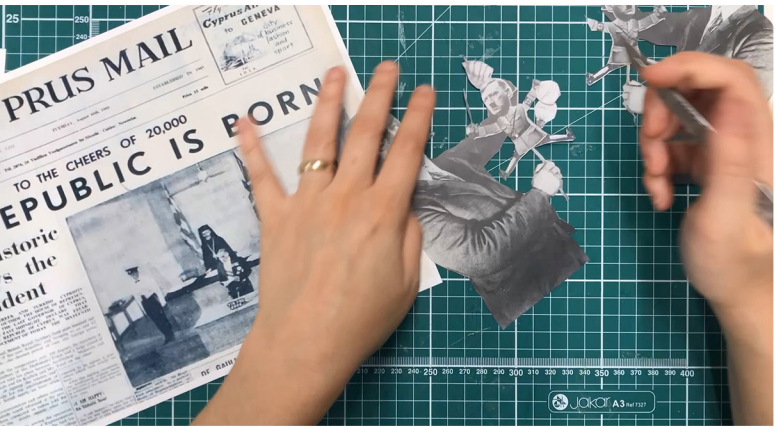
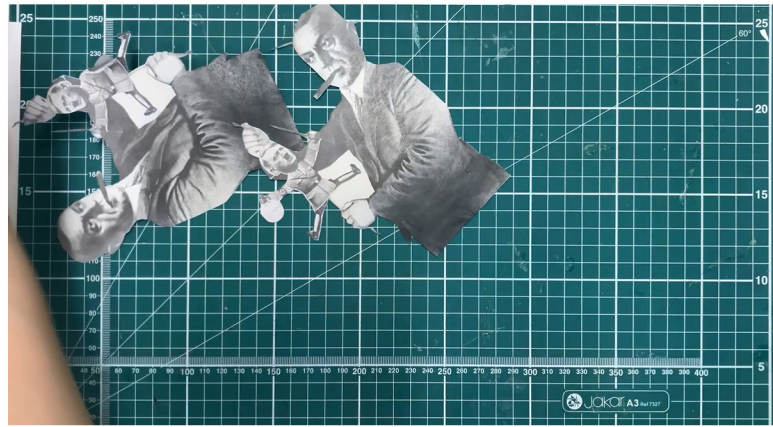
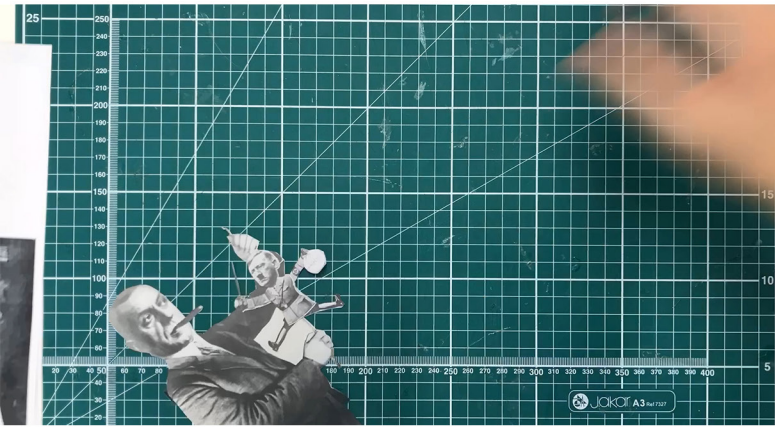
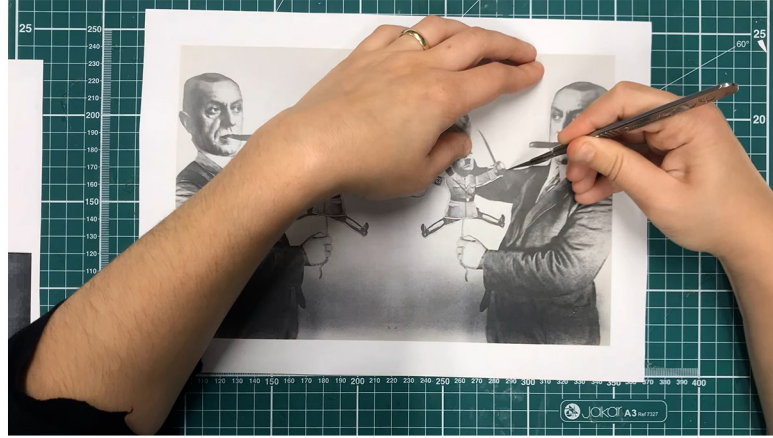
27 Papadakis, Peristianis, and Welz, *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict*, 2.

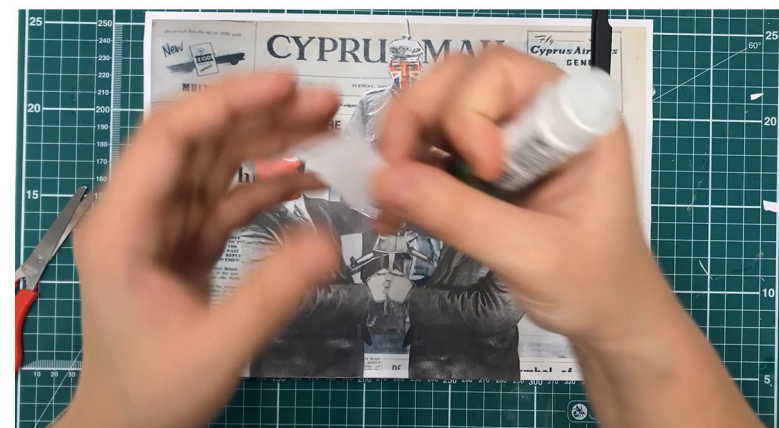
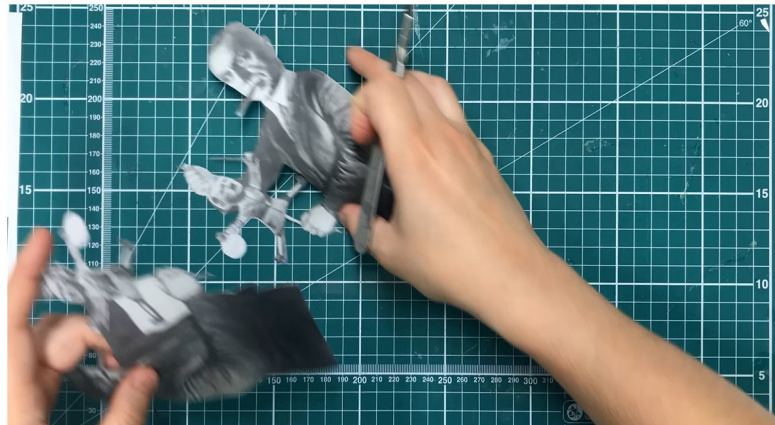
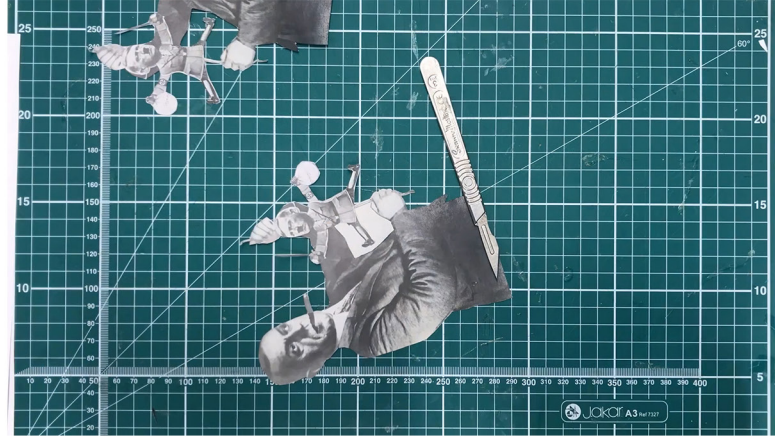


7 - Republics are Born

a governance structure influenced by three dominant powers attempting to govern two distinct societies. In my visual exploration focused on this theme, I encountered images of political leaders convened around a table, a newspaper, and some political images. However, the primary intention of the collage was not to capture a specific moment in time, rather, I sought to underscore the absurdity of the situation. Consequently, the paramount question became how to depict a society moulded by these three influential forces. In the compositional process, I highlighted the efforts to maintain control over the island's factions, portraying this dynamic through a puppetry motif. The Republic of Cyprus, influenced by Turkey and Greece, is depicted in a puppet-like manner, while the United Kingdom assumes the role of orchestrator in this scenario. A backdrop of newspapers formalises the situation: "The Republic is Born". [7]

Following a successful attempt to establish a republic on the island, the militant organisation EOKA escalated their violent activities, targeting the Turkish population on the island. This culminated in the execution of the Akritas Plan, a strategic initiative conceived by EOKA's leader, Grivas to





establish Greek dominance, colloquially referred to as 'enosis'. The primary objective was to eliminate all individuals opposing the notion of enosis, with particular emphasis on the Turkish minority. The actions taken in pursuance of this plan have since been recognised as a critical turning point in the history of the Turkish Cypriot community.

It is important to recognise the divergence in perspectives on significant historical events within the Cypriot context. One such notable date is 21 December 1963, when a faction of Greek Cypriot nationalists, allegedly linked to the Akritas Plan, launched an assault on a Turkish Cypriot enclave in Nicosia. This event, widely known as the Bloody Christmas Genocide, triggered a cycle of retaliations, resulting in the tragic loss of numerous innocent civilians, including women and children. While Greek Cypriots may perceive the island's division in 1974 as a seminal moment, for Turkish Cypriots, it is the Bloody Christmas of 1963 that symbolises the commencement of persecution against their community, ultimately leading to an irreversible trajectory toward separation. According to Turkish recourses, this was the point at which the persecution of the Turkish Cypriots reached an unbearable point and separation became an irreversible solution. Consequently, this date bears substantial historical significance, both within the framework of the conflict and in the annals of Turkish Cypriot history.

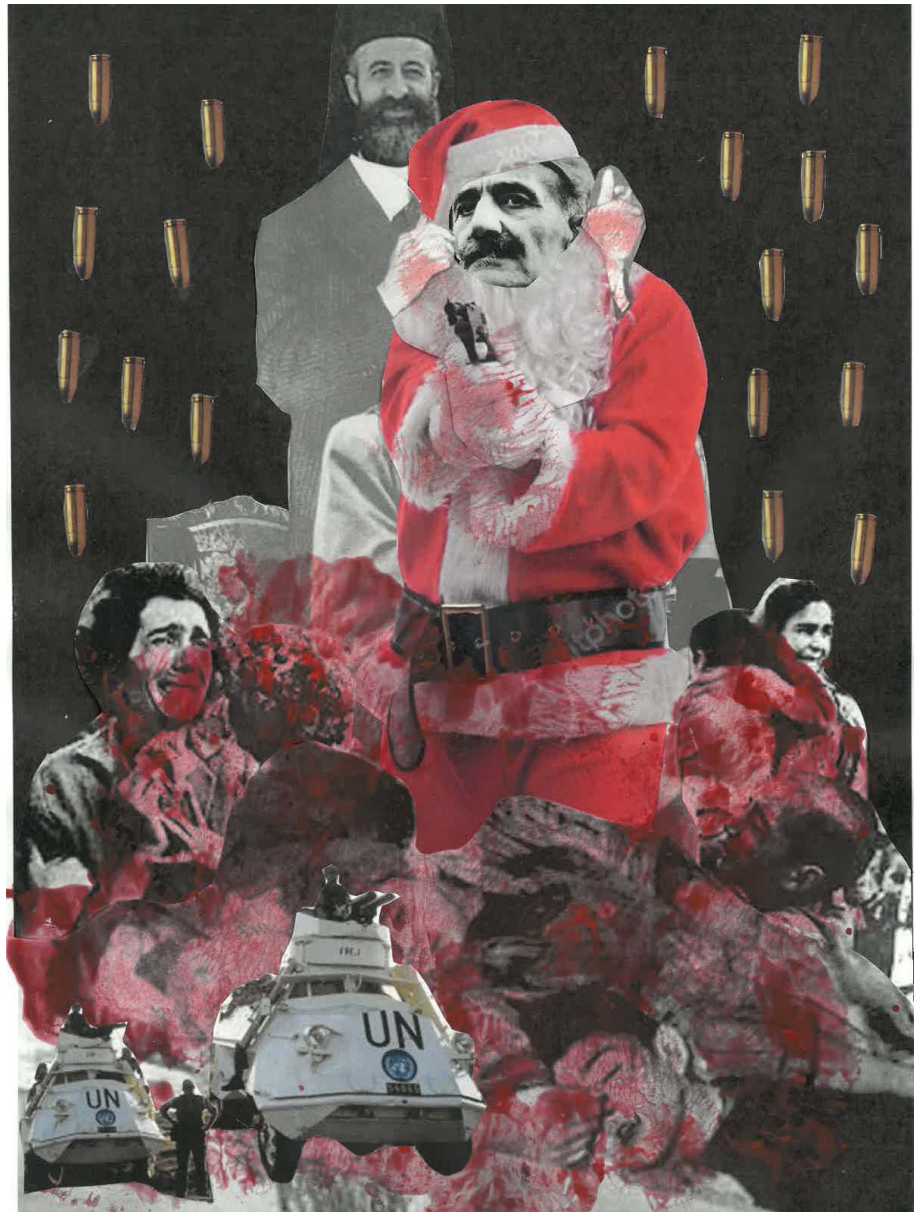
This history, as Yiannis Papadakis, a Greek Cypriot anthropologist, recounts in his book *"Echos from the Dead Zone"*, has been largely overlooked by Greek sources.²⁹ In contrast, my immersion in first-hand Turkish accounts has led me to consider it a pivotal turning point in the island's contentious history. This duality is significant for comprehending the diverse junctures in this conflict, which ultimately influenced the creation of the collage. However, my access to Turkish sources, coupled with my proficiency in interpreting records in my native language, inevitably introduces a certain bias to this composition. A visual exploration of "Bloody Christmas" does not merely present a historical narrative; it is a call to action, a community's uprising, conveyed with urgency and vivid imagery. While I, as both collagist and researcher, aimed

29 Papadakis has dedicated extensive time to conducting fieldwork in both Turkey and Cyprus, spanning across both sides of the Buffer Zone. His research spans limited access to the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', protected by government guardians, as well as extensive time spent in Turkey itself and a year spent in the village of Pyla/Pile in the UN-supervised 'Dead Zone'. This comprehensive investigation delves into the diverse perspectives of individuals entangled in the conflict. Throughout his research, Papadakis grapples with personal biases rooted in his upbringing on the Greek side of the divide. Simultaneously, he undertakes an analysis of the contrasting historical narratives of the two sides. This dual endeavour deepens his investigation of the region's complex dynamics. In Yiannis Papadakis, *Echoes from the Dead Zone : Across the Cyprus Divide* (London; New York: New York: I.B. Tauris; Distributed in the U.S.A. by Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

30 - From my research diary on 7 May 2021.

In the turbulent history of Cyprus, each community has significant days they either wish to remember or forget. December 1963 was a pivotal moment in the history of the island's division, particularly for Turkish Cypriots, and is known as Bloody Christmas. For them, this date marks a crucial moment when the EOKA terrorist organisation allegedly planned a genocide against them on the night of 23rd to 24th December 1963. After this night, the division of the island, especially for Turkish Cypriots, became permanent.

During my image research, I encountered images of EOKA, Grivas, people fleeing, and the haunting image of three young children and their mother who were killed in a bathtub. As my research progressed, there came a point where my identity as a researcher and my commitment to remaining neutral to historical events gave way to intense feelings of anger and sadness. Being able to access first and Turkish sources and having grown up in Turkey, I felt a personal connection to this land, its people, and its history. Before starting this collage, I knew that all I could think about were 'anger' and 'sadness.' I depicted Grivas as Santa Claus, holding a gun instead of toys and standing over corpses rather than on a sleigh. This was to illustrate the transformation of the sacred holiday of Christmas into a bloody incident. As I continued, I realised that the language of the collage had morphed into something resembling hate speech rather than a research piece. I added a layer of paint over the bodies to blur their faces and included UN vehicles to represent their official presence on the island after that date. Although this experiment allowed me to express my emotions and create a powerful visual narrative, I recognised that I had moved away from my identity as a collagist-researcher and focused solely on my emotions. The collage ended up resembling more of an anti-EOKA activist poster rather than a historical research piece. This led me to contemplate the suitability of collage as a medium for historical research. While a historical investigation is important for the spatial research of Nicosia, I also acknowledge the importance of finding a balance between emotional expression and objective research.

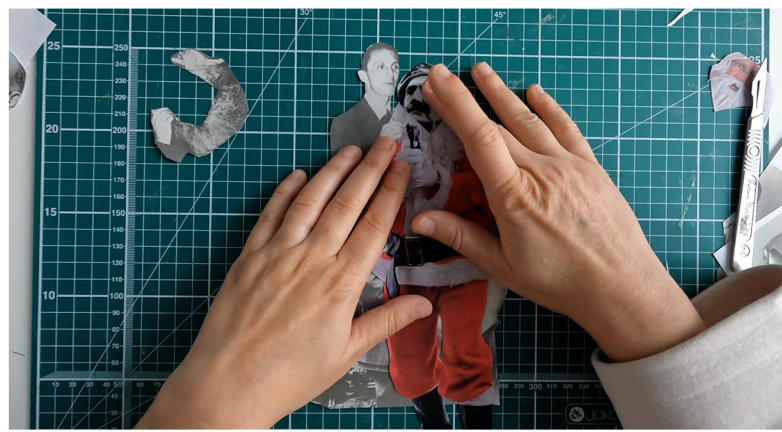
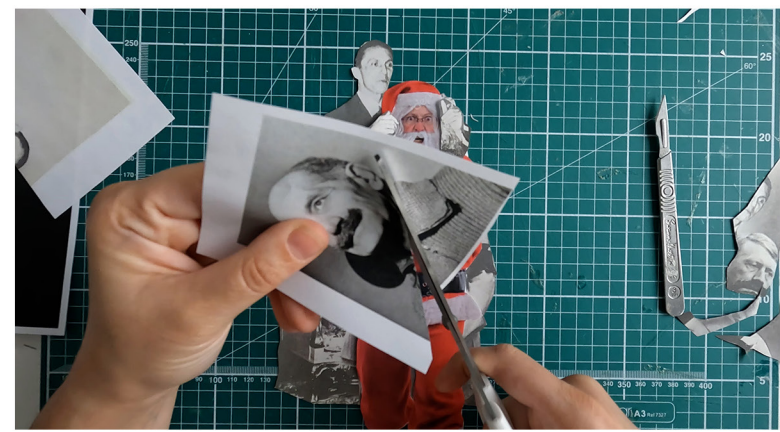


9 - Bloody Christmas

to maintain an impartial stance despite my Turkish heritage, the resulting composition attests that I cannot remain indifferent to the events of this history. Moreover, it underscores how collage, with its amalgamation of thoughts and fragments, can become viscerally evocative, shocking, even provocative, and potentially hazardous.³⁰

In the composition, Grivas assumes the guise of Santa Claus, but instead of a gift, he wields a firearm. Behind him stands an advocate, cast in the silhouette of Makarios, the leader of the Greek Cypriots. From the heavens, it's not snow that falls, but bullets. Upon the ground lies a crimson blotch resembling blood, and behind this stain, figures seem to be contorted in anguish. It is a provocative image, one that alludes to historical events, serving as a sort of interpretation of the skirmishes that transpired in Cyprus during





Christmas of 1963 from a Turkish perspective. However, it carries an inherent potency, an assertiveness that can be perceived as confrontational. Yet, the most overt interpretation remains that of an aggressive and assertive amalgamation of contentious fragments from a turbulent region fuelled by intense emotions. [9]

The violence continued until 1967, ultimately leading to the partition of the island into distinct regions: the Greek Cypriots in the South and the Turkish Cypriots in the North part, with a demilitarised zone between them referred to as the 'Green Line'. This division also established a buffer zone that was placed under the United Nation's supervision, aimed at quelling inter-communal conflicts and preserving peace. Seeking to forestall further turmoil, the United Nations Security Council took the initiative to establish the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in 1964. Simultaneously, this demarcation line marked the inception of two separate administrations on the island.

By 1967, the conflict between different ethnic groups had eased, leading to gradual negotiations and indicating a more stable political situation. However, the ascension of the military junta in Greece that year redirected the focus of the Greek Cypriot community towards consolidating their dominance over the island and expelling the Turkish contingent, who had staked territorial claims. This renewed violence against the Turkish population prompted the declaration of a temporary Turkish Administration in 1967. Although originally established as a provisional measure, the term "temporary" was subsequently removed, laying the foundation for creating a permanent Turkish state on the island. This administration assumed responsibility for overseeing the living arrangements, governance, and judicial affairs of the Turkish community on the island and played a key role in facilitating the establishment of a federated state.³¹

In 1971, this situation also gave rise to internal conflicts within the Greek Cypriot community, leading to the formation of a new nationalist group named EOKA-B.³² This pro-Greek union faction staged a coup d'état against the then President of the Republic, Archbishop Makarios, on 15 July 1974, with the support of the Greek junta, effectively usurping control of the island's government. Turkey viewed this coup as Greek interference, leading to the

31 Vatansever, "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelişimi."

32 EOKA-B was established in 1971 in Cyprus, founded by Grivas. Grivas held Makarios responsible for the unfavourable outcome of the Zurich and London agreements, which were seen as detrimental to the interests of the Greek Cypriots. He regarded these agreements as a form of betrayal and advocated the reunification of Cyprus with Greece. This new armed organisation, composed of former members of EOKA and others, also aimed at the establishment of Greek rule on the island and enosis.

overthrow of the legitimate military regime.³³ Nicos Sampson, notorious for his violent actions against Turkish Cypriots, was appointed as the new president by the new regime on the island.³⁴ This development posed a threat of annexation by Greece, prompting Turkey to take action on 20 July 1974, in accordance with the treaties establishing the Republic of Cyprus and its guarantor rights.³⁵

In 1974, Turkish military forces intervened, gaining control of 37 per cent of the island of Cyprus. This event finalised the partition, resulting in a mass migration of Greek Cypriots to the south and Turkish Cypriots to the north. As a result, the inhabitants of both communities were forced to abandon their pre-1974 lives, homes and even their common existence. The partition established an impenetrable border between the two communities, erasing the names of towns, streets and neighbourhoods. Consequently, a new system was established, giving each community control over its own laws, customs, and structure, with Turkish Cypriots predominant in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south.

As mentioned previously, the historical accounts of events in Cyprus are constructed differently in Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot versions, with different timelines used to create their narratives. In particular, the Greek Cypriot version of history identifies the Turkish 'invasion' in 1974 as the beginning of the war, hardship and refugee experience, ignoring the conflicts between 1963 and 1974. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot version of history begins the period of turmoil in 1963, a time when many people were forced to leave their villages, became refugees and resettled in different parts of the island. The events of 1974 are presented by Turkish sources as a 'happy peace-keeping operation', while Greek sources call it a Turkish 'invasion'.³⁶ Therefore, it is important to note that these contrasting accounts exist and highlight the different perspectives and interpretations of historical events in contested spaces.

I therefore endeavoured to visualise this particular moment in Cyprus' history through collage. However, unlike the previous collage, I focused on Greek-Cypriot sources. My visual research led me to a specific image: Turkish soldiers descending with parachutes, symbolising the onset of the Turkish invasion. Using this image as a

33 Vatansever, "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelisimi"; Ismail, *150 Soruda Kıbrıs Sorunu*; Eroglu, "Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyetini Yaratan Tarihi Surec ve Son Gelismeler"; Ozarslan, *Uluslararası Hukuk Acısından Kıbrıs Sorunu ve Avrupa Birliği'nin Yaklaşımı*; Ozmen and Ozmen, "Kıbrıs Türklerinin Kökeni ve Sosyo-Kültürel Özellikleri."

34 Anita Bakshi, *Topographies of Memories, Topographies of Memories*, 2017, 78.

35 Vatansever, "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelisimi."

36 Bakshi, *Topogr. Memories*, 79.

starting point, I replaced the airborne soldiers with the tips of tanks, indicating their origin through flags. This visual arrangement evokes resonances of an incursion, casting the collage as a metaphorical portrayal of armaments descending from the heavens, infusing it with an unsettling intensity. Yet, this encounter prompted a profound introspection, illuminating the inherently subjective nature of collage interpretation. It underscored the different validity of disparate historical perspectives, a nuance I had been keenly aware of throughout the process. Despite this awareness, the emotional resonance of this collage was inescapably tethered to a profound sense of historical betrayal for me, serving as a poignant reminder of the strong and potentially dangerous power of fragments.³⁷

[11]

The incidents of 1974 in Cyprus resulted in the re-emergence of the island's uncertain conceptual and constitutional status. Greek Cypriots, feeling disillusioned by Greece due to the tumultuous actions of the Greek junta, continued to lean on Greece for political support. Meanwhile, the Turkish Cypriots initially welcomed Turkey's army but gradually developed resentment towards the military and political dominance exerted over their part of the island, as well as the influx of Turkish settlers. While the Greek Cypriots held sway over the Republic of Cyprus, gaining international recognition, Northern Cypriots unilaterally declared themselves the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus"³⁸ in 1983. This recognition, however, extended solely from Turkey and was considered a self-proclaimed entity in the north by the broader international community.

Following the permanent division of Cyprus, a notable shift occurred in the island's economic, social, and cultural dynamics. The Greek Cypriots experienced rapid economic development, in stark contrast to the stagnation of the northern Cypriot economy. Turkish Cypriots found themselves isolated and economically disadvantaged. The construction efforts aimed at accommodating refugees and the swift urbanisation process played a pivotal role in revitalising the economy in the south. Conversely, in the north, Turkish Cypriots grappled with ongoing disputes stemming from internal issues, international non-recognition, and economic embargoes. Yael Navaro's book, *The Make-Believe Space*,³⁹ offers a comprehensive analysis and critical observations on the ramifications of partition in the northern region. Navaro's research depicts how the neglected areas utilised for partition and

37 - From my research diary on 7 May 2021. As a researcher with a Turkish background, I find the year 1974 one of the most intriguing in the history of the Cyprus Problem.

Initially, I knew it as the 'Liberation of Cyprus' and the 'Cyprus Peacekeeping Operation.' However, British and Greek sources I have read refer to it as the 'Turkish Occupation of Cyprus.'

Most Greek sources I encountered describe this date as the beginning of the island's division - labelling it the 'Turkish invasion.'

Despite my initial reluctance to accept this perspective, I decided to approach my research from the viewpoint of a Greek Cypriot, rather than a Turkish one. This decision prompted a critical question: Could I set aside my identity, nationality, and the history I had been taught?

To continue my research, I sought out sources that presented opposing views or those unfamiliar to me. I focused on documentaries and interviews to gain a more nuanced understanding of the events. During this process, I came across a striking image - Turkish soldiers parachuting from a helicopter into the island's mountainous terrain. This image is widely used in many sources to depict the Turkish landing in Cyprus, and it became the basis for my collage experiment.

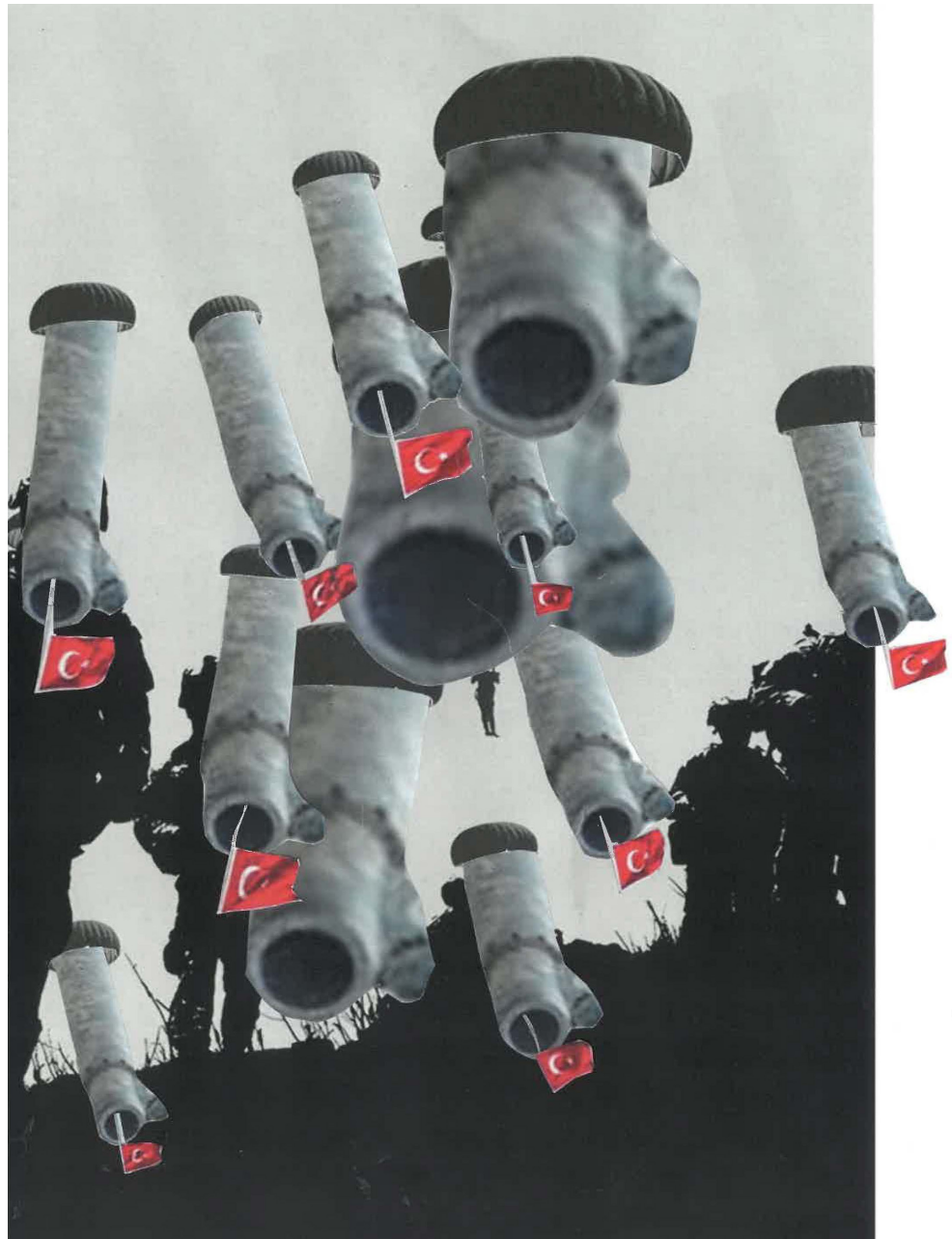
As I put myself in the shoes of a Greek Cypriot, I perceived each parachute as more than just a soldier; it represented a weapon.

In my collage, I merged the bomb part of a tank with a Turkish flag attached to the end of each parachute, creating the illusion that each was firing a gunshot.

P.S. However, my collage sparked a heated argument with my family. They found my work unacceptable, expressing anger and upset that I, as a Turkish person, would depict such a scene.

38 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in Turkish, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti (KKTC) was established on 15 November 1983. While the country is recognised by Turkey, it is accepted as a self-declared country non-recognised internationally.

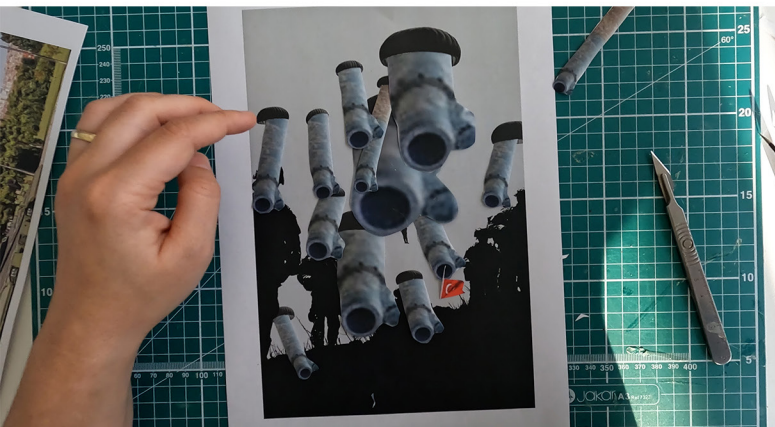
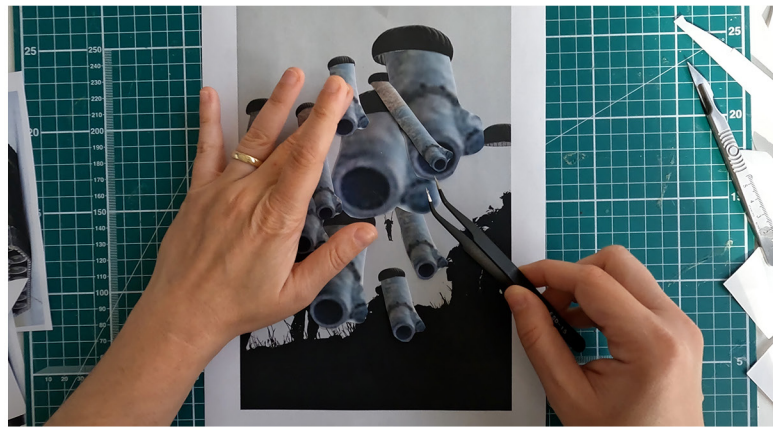
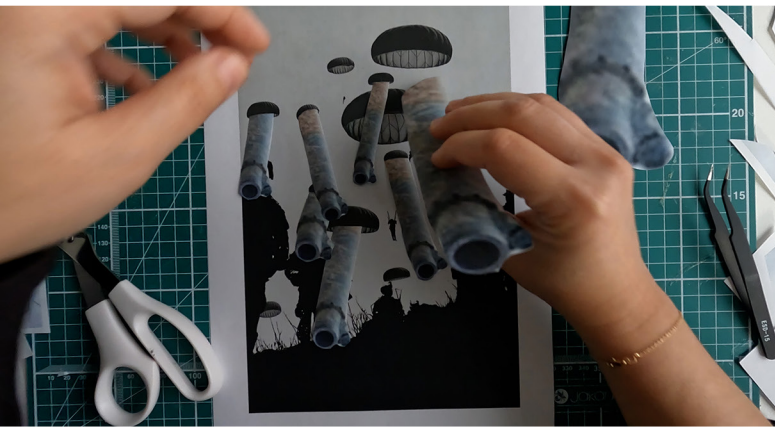
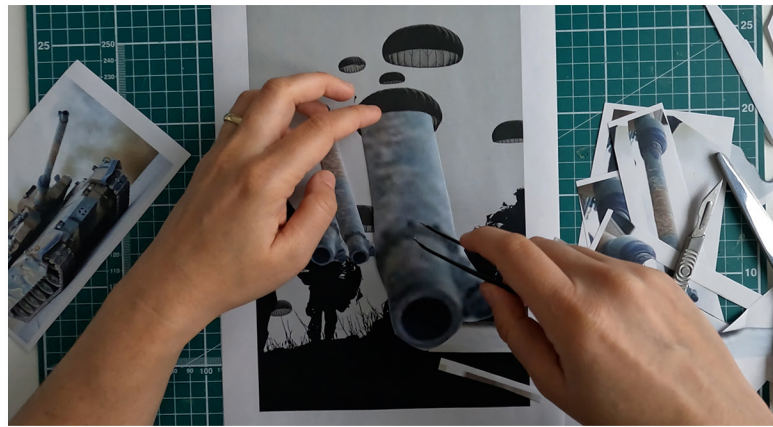
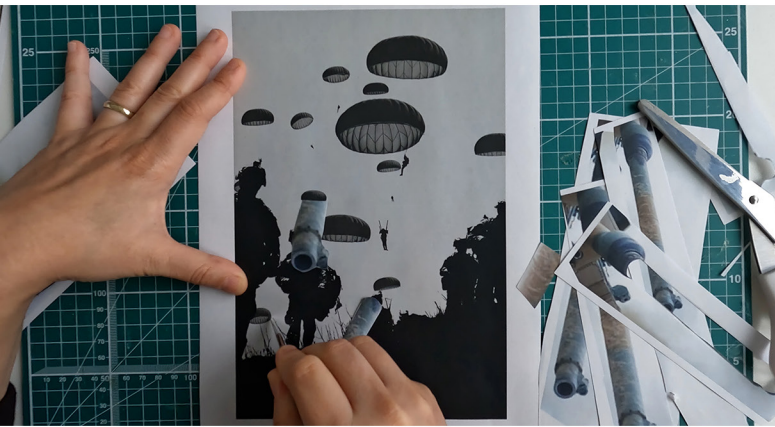
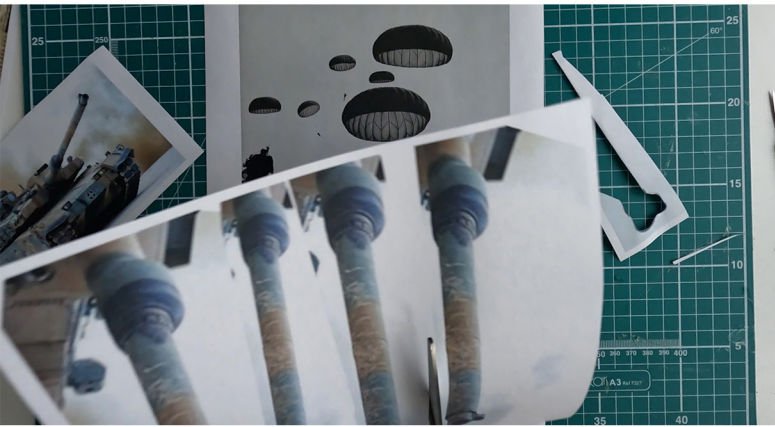
39 Yael Navaro-Yashin, *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Policy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

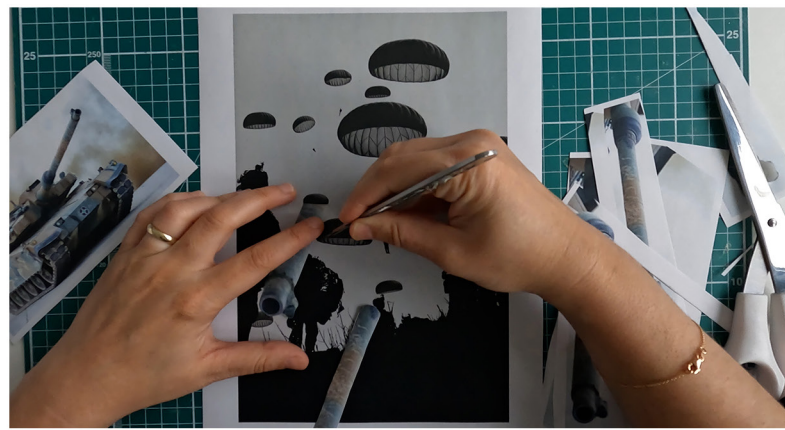
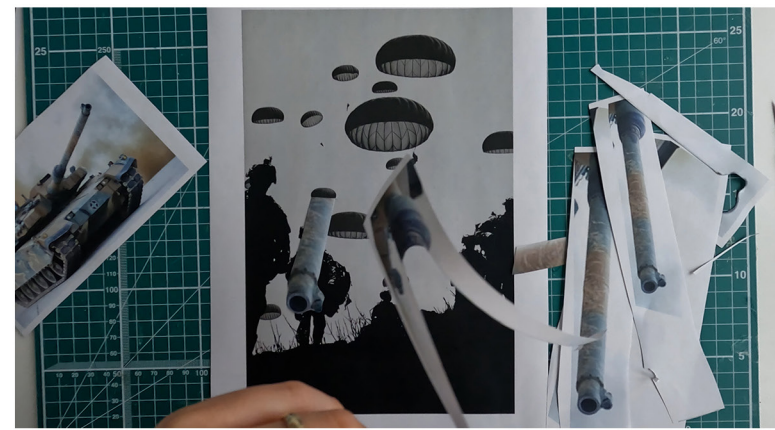


11 - Invention?

their environs significantly influenced the population's social fabric, cultural norms, and affective experiences. Her research notes that the border zone and the walled city of Nicosia had become neglected and even class-defining zones within the changing social culture. Moreover, abandoned buildings in the border's periphery and the walled city became a looting zone for migrants and "looters".⁴⁰

40 In her research and interviews, Yeel Navaro reported that the buildings were left empty immediately after the division was subjected to looting and that the local population recognised them as looters. In the immediate aftermath of the division, this was a policy supported by the government of Northern Cyprus. Abandoned houses belonging to Greek Cypriots were given to Turkish families who migrated from the south to the north, whose needs were met by the belongings they left behind. However, Navaro points out that this turned into a "booty hunt" for some in the north, Navaro-Yashin, chap. 8.





On the other hand, various attempts have also been made to address the longstanding issue of Cyprus' division. The United Nations has played a critical role in mediating these efforts, serving for peacekeeping in the Green Zone and between the two regions. In 2004, a significant international initiative aimed at a federal, bi-communal and bi-zonal solution was launched to resolve the Cyprus problem. This endeavour culminated in referendums on both sides regarding an UN-brokered constitutional settlement known as the Annan Plan. However, the plan met with resistance on the Greek Cypriot side, with a substantial majority of 76% voting against it, despite garnering acceptance from 66% of the Turkish Cypriot side.⁴¹ After the failed referendum, the Republic of Cyprus became a European Union (EU) state, which posed some challenges on the island. Greek Cypriot accession to the EU led to the exclusion of Turkish Cypriots, and the Green Line became an uncertain eastern border of the EU. However, despite these difficulties, by 2003, border crossings were established along the Green Line, effectively opening the previously impassable internal border and enabling individuals to traverse to the 'other side'. This marked the initial phase of the now more permeable north-south Cypriot border.

The events culminating in the partition of Cyprus wrought profound changes across its political, economic, and social landscapes. But the division and buffer zone also provided a semblance of tranquillity, affording a fertile ground for dialogue and a potential for coexistence. Though a comprehensive negotiation process remains elusive, these projects witness a burgeoning spirit of cooperation and an earnest endeavour toward harmonious cohabitation. While intercommunal tensions persist, initiatives like the Nicosia Sewerage Project, Nicosia Master Plan, and Europa Nostra have sprung forth, which will be explored in a subsequent section of this research to understand how Nicosia's future is imagined. However, one of the pivotal moments in this discourse came with the historic border opening in 2003.⁴²

The border's unsealing marks the first encounter after three decades of division. Scrutinising images from this juncture reveal a tapestry of emotions - hope and excitement intertwined with fear and trepidation, all experienced on a fragmented island. Creating this collage proved to be a more contemplative and intricate process than my prior works. It encapsulates a shared humanity, transcending singular allegiance. Simultaneously, it underscores the lingering presence of political and military might on the island. I chose to focus on the border's first intentional gap - the crossing,

42 - From my research diary on 10 May 2021

After the partition of the island, both sides led isolated lives in their respective regions until 2003. Despite the better living conditions in South Cyprus, owing to its relations with Europe and accession to the European Union, people on both sides faced similar challenges, such as the memories of their pain, losses, and troubled history. The opening of a crossing point across the border in 2003, however, allowed people to see the other half of the island for the first time in 30 years.

I was deeply moved by a documentary I watched about this period. It focused on individuals who had lived on the other side of the island before the division and were crossing the line to see their former homes, neighbours, or friends again. They were searching for traces of their past lives.

Motivated by this, I decided to create a collage to commemorate the border crossing. I gathered fragments of soldiers, signs, and other images that I thought would enhance the composition of the collage.

Although that period marked the celebration of the border crossing after 30 years, the reality was not that simple. The images I selected included soldiers from Greece, Greek Cypriots, Turks, Turkish Cypriots, and the United Nations. My experiment aimed to underscore the significance of the crossing point on the porous border of a divided island—a place where people could experience excitement, fear, and confusion while still feeling the presence of military power.

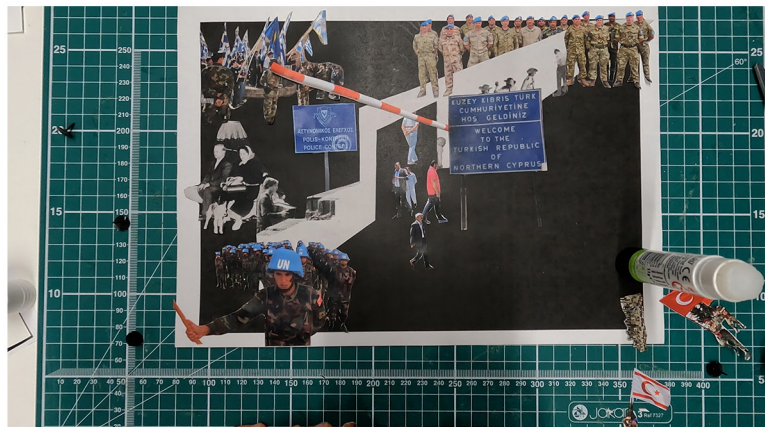
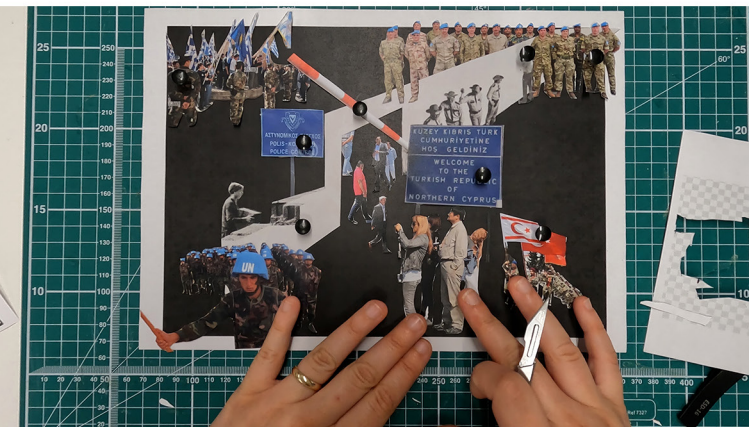
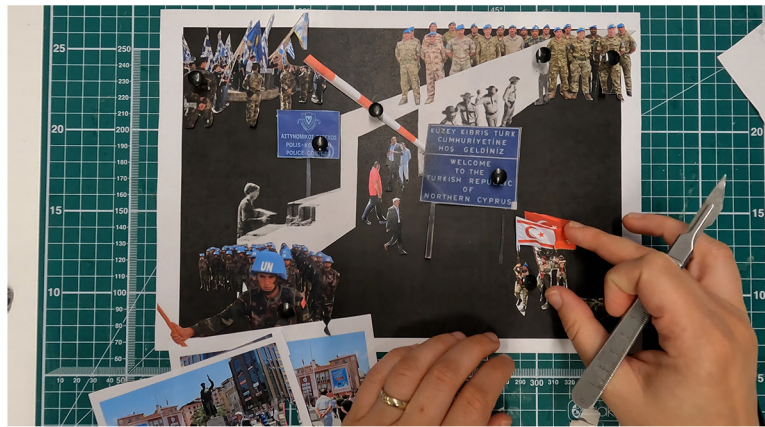
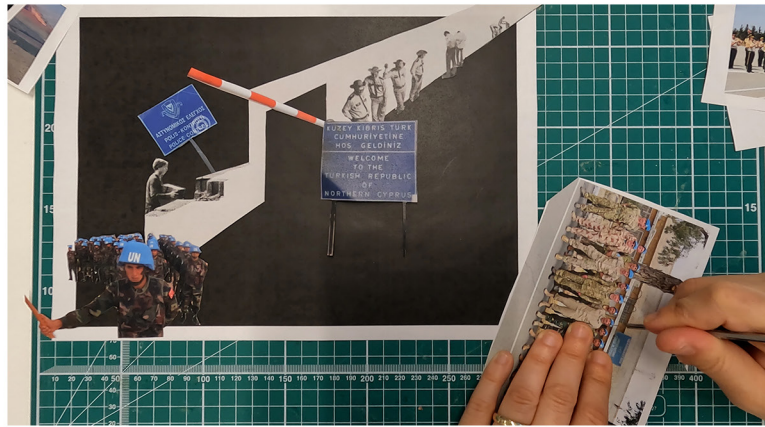
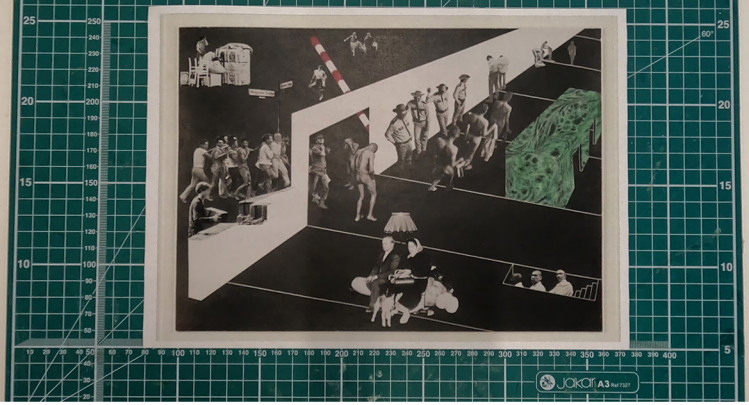
However, I struggled to find harmony in the collage. Although the elements seemed to convey my message, I was not completely satisfied with the result. Nevertheless, I decided to stop working on it. While the collage may not have turned out as I had envisioned, it appears to communicate a message about the complexities of the situation.

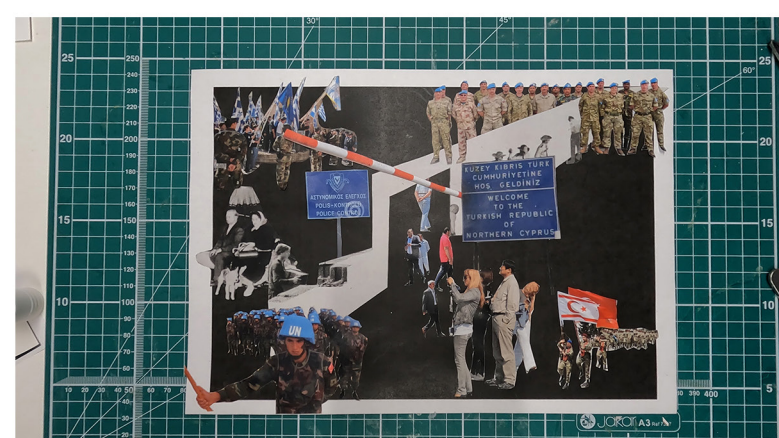
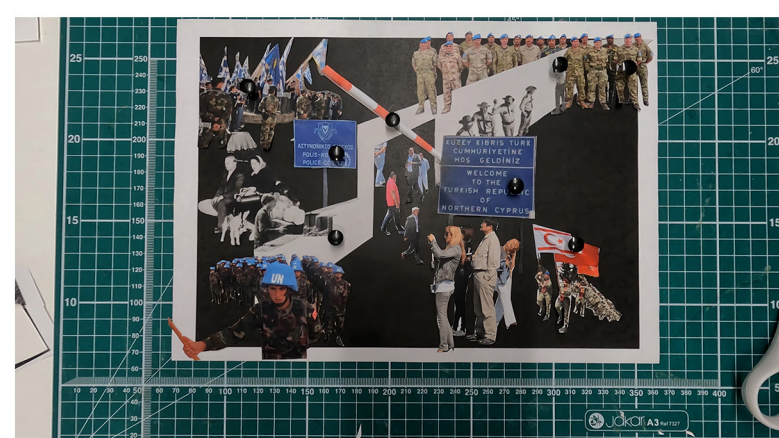
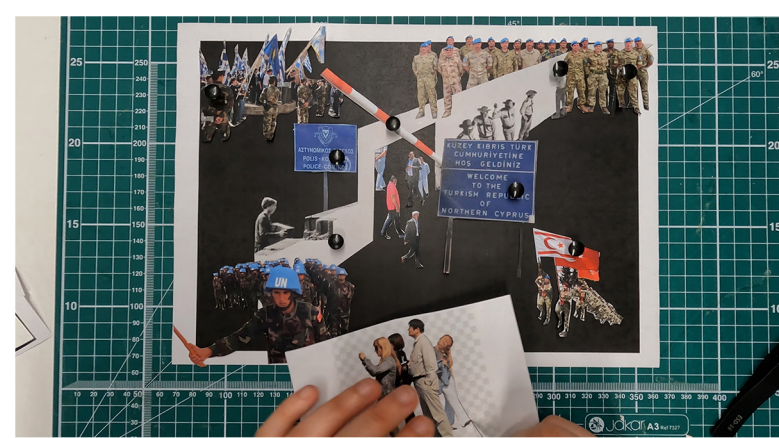
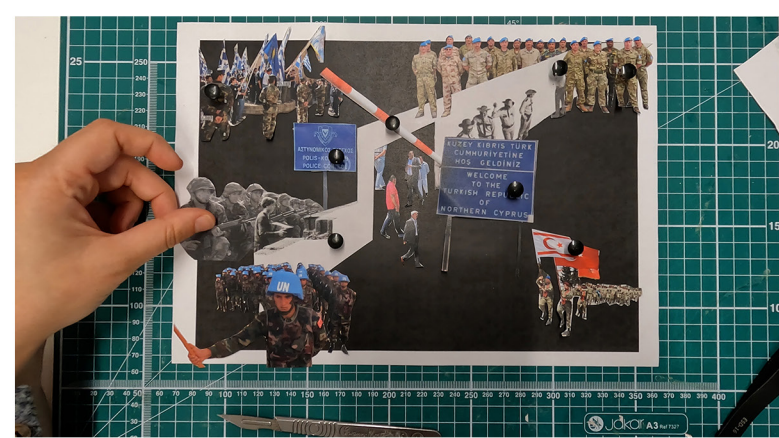
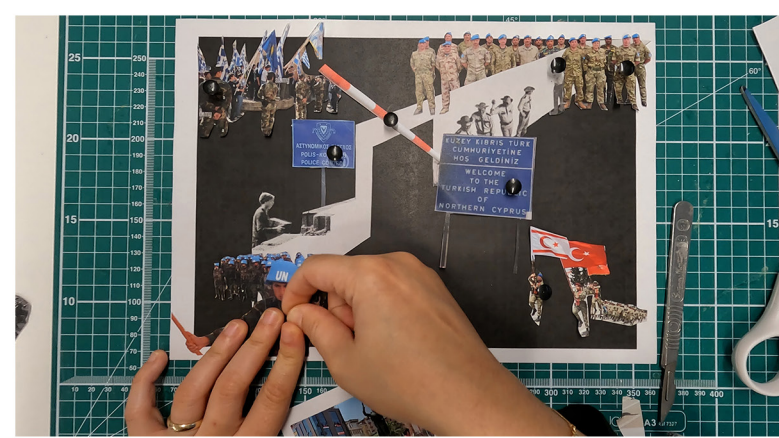
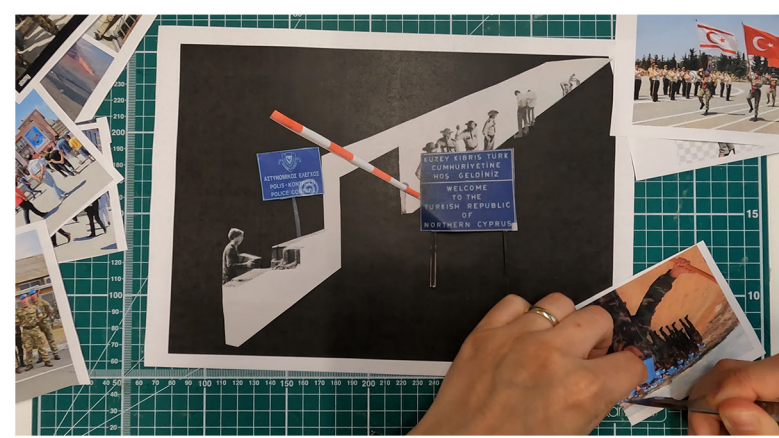
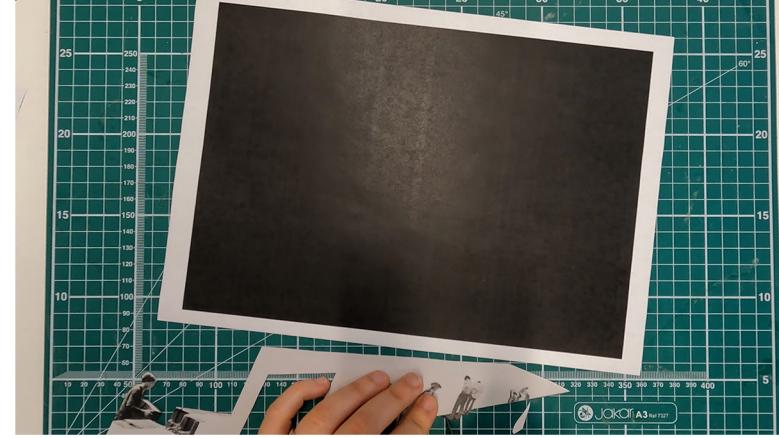
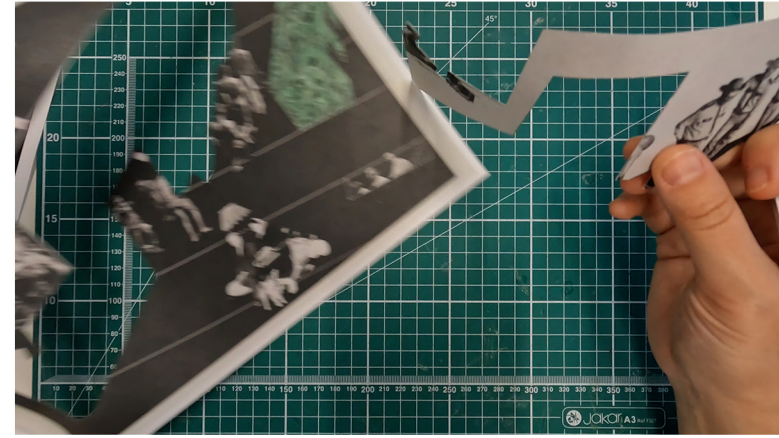
41 Papadakis, Peristianis, and Welz, *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History, and an Island in Conflict*, 4.



13 - Crossing Point

the sensation of being a guest in the homeland of countless displaced souls, but still all within a controlled milieu. This collage materialised as a composition in which myriad perspectives could take root. Soldiers from both sides, joined by UN forces, grasp the edges while border-adjacent onlookers eagerly await their turn. Yet, beneath the surface, one can discern the interplay of ethnicities, a subtle voice of rebellion. This collage is an illustration, a testament to the intricacy of that moment and offers a visual elucidation of this intricate tapestry. Its fragments yield diverse readings akin to the multifaceted voices that coexist in Cyprus through collage. [13]





Collage sequence on Cyprus' Past

This chapter has provided an episodic chronological overview of the complex history of Cyprus, encompassing its rich historical background, foreign domination, and the subsequent national stratification that shaped the island's texture. After being ruled by the Ottomans for three centuries, Cyprus became a British protectorate in 1878, eventually leading to an international dispute. Despite efforts to foster peace and cooperation between the Turkish and Greek communities, conflict persisted during British rule and erupted into social unrest following independence in 1960. This unrest culminated in the island's partition in 1974, with Greek Cypriots living in the South under the umbrella of the Republic of Cyprus and Turkish Cypriots in the North. During this period, the two communities on the island were in constant negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem, and many proposals for a solution were put forward by other countries and the United Nations. However, these efforts have not yielded any results due to fundamental differences between the international community and the island communities regarding the nature of a new state. While the island communities seek the right to self-determination, the international community pursues its own interests. On the other hand, the accession of Southern Cyprus to the European Union in 2004 has led to various movements, such as the opening of border gates, which have had significant impacts on the island's position and development.

Importantly, this research has also illuminated the differing historical perspectives held by various sources in Cyprus' history. Biased historical accounts of Cyprus emerge from Turks and Turkish Cypriots, Greeks and Greek Cypriots, as well as the British colonial viewpoint. For example, while Bloody Christmas is considered one of the most important moments in Turkish Cypriot history, there is no record of such an event in Greek sources. Similarly, the Turkish invasion in 1974 is framed as a process of liberation in Turkish sources, while Greek accounts perceive it as the culmination of the split and the height of the conflict. These varying interpretations underscore the complexity of Cyprus' history. This chapter aimed to elucidate these key historical moments through a multifaceted lens.

The layered and multi-perspective history of Cyprus has profoundly influenced the process of visual research for the collages. Significant historical moments have been reinterpreted and comprehended more deeply through this medium. This visual research can be described as the pursuit of visual representations corresponding to informational content, thus serving as an integral part of understanding Cyprus' contested history. The process unearthed various details about these moments, including prominent figures, locations, and symbols. Moreover, it instigates a process of active learning,

inquiry, contemplation, and profound comprehension regarding the research subject through visuals. As I often noted in my diary, the acquired information undergoes thorough investigation.

For instance, during the creation of the collage entitled 'Sultan and Queen Together', I found myself pondering:

*... I could hear my secondary school teacher's voice in my ears, saying, 'The island became a pawn in a power struggle.' But what did these words really mean? How could the island transition from the protection of one power to another? And how could this shift in power be represented through the image of a person?*⁴³

Similarly, in the making 'ENOSIS' collage, I delved deeper into the notion, realising its complexity, as noted in my diary:

*As I continued my visual research, I discovered that enosis became particularly entrenched following the British occupation of Cyprus. While Greek Cypriots struggled to tolerate the presence of other nationalities on the island, the British government's presence further complicated the situation. But what did enosis really mean? As a Turk, I was unsure how to approach this term. For me, it represented an unattainable idea. However, for Greeks, it appeared to be a desirable future.*⁴⁴

The visual research process not only shaped the collages but also prompted internal and external questioning. These inquiries initially impacted me as a collagist and subsequently as a researcher, offering insights into how to convey them effectively. As documented in my diary:

*As my research progresses, I am particularly drawn to the figures of Archbishop Makarios and George Grivas. They represent (and still embody) powerful ideas and aspirations. Exploring Grivas and his role as the founder and leader of the EOKA, a terrorist group in Cyprus, has forced me to confront my own emotions and prejudices. I found myself angered by the injustices and atrocities committed during this conflict. I struggled with the tension between my role as a researcher and my urge to express my feelings through collage.*⁴⁵

Beyond this historical review, this chapter was my first foray into the potential of collage-making as a research methodology, employing pivotal moments from Cyprus' history as the foundation for visual representations. Many of the collages in this chapter attempt to be descriptive and interpretative in nature, shaped through previous research within the framework of this research project and refined through visual inquiry. Consequently, they serve

43 *From my research diary on 5 May 2021.*

44 *From my research diary on 5 May 2021.*

45 *From my research diary on 6 May 2021.*

as visual depictions of specific concepts. Nevertheless, they also serve as a catalyst for realising myriad facets of collage. They show how collages can be ironic, provocative, evocative, inquisitive, critical, manipulative, perilous, aggressive, tantalising, shocking, emotive, and illustrative.

It is imperative to acknowledge that, given the contentious nature of Cyprus, the fragments within these collages have the potential to evoke controversy. This echoes the findings from Part I of this research, where the artistic and architectural works produced during the siege of Sarajevo, including Woods' project, were analysed. These works during the Sarajevo conflict exemplified how artists and architects used their creations to communicate often silent but striking messages to a global audience. Similarly, in the Cyprus context, the multi-dimensional nature of collage is evident, adding layers of meaning and diversity to the representations. As the intensity of Cyprus' historical conflicts escalated, the nature of the collages transformed, adopting a more striking and sometimes 'shocking' character. For example, the initial collage, 'Sultan and Queen Together', not only provides a visual description of the period but also conveys an ironic undertone. Specific fragments symbolise distinct meanings that coalesce to form a composite whole. In contrast, 'Bloody Christmas' exudes chaos, directly referencing violence and employing aggressive language. Despite its provocative nature, it adds depth and invites deeper reflection. Therefore, while the collages in this chapter serve as visual representations of critical moments in Cyprus' history, they also demonstrate the diverse potential of collage as a medium, mirroring the approach observed in the works from the siege of Sarajevo.

However, the provocative nature of collage and the multi-dimensional history of Cyprus necessitate caution against solely relying on this method to understand the contested history. Collage facilitates the juxtaposition of diverse, historically interpreted narratives, thereby highlighting the complexity and traumatic experiences of the island's layered history. It offers viewers an interpretative representation of historical events, often indirect, suggestive, and occasionally surprising. This method can evoke non-narrative and non-cognitive responses, eliciting unexpected and sometimes disconcerting emotions, particularly in the context of disputed territories with complex histories. Collage, characterised by a process of learning and discovery, as demonstrated in this chapter, ultimately creates definitive images. Therefore, using an image as the sole medium to understand a historical event can be misleading. However, the meaning, rather than being suspended, becomes less distinct and more multifaceted. Collage offers a comprehensive interpretation, requiring analysing the collaged image as a composite of multiple fragments, each encapsulating a unique aspect of a singular moment. As discussed in the previous chapter, Woods' project for Sarajevo was not presented as a definitive solution, but rather as a proposal,

exemplifying this approach. Thus, the collages in this research represent the contested and multifaceted history of Cyprus in a manner that is not certain readings but encourages a nuanced and multifaceted interpretation of history.

In conclusion, this chapter contributes to a broader comprehension of the historical complexity of Cyprus, spanning from the influence of various empires and the repercussions of British colonialism to the surge of Greek nationalism and the notion of Enosis, the rise of Turkish Cypriot resistance and calls for Taksim, emblematic of the island's division, to the establishment of border crossing points. This exploration has been undertaken from the dual perspectives of a researcher and a collagist. It also underscores the potential of collage as a research method, illuminating and visualising key moments and concepts, thus affording a distinctive and nuanced understanding of the past. Although the unreliability of collaged images as a singular source for historical research has been mentioned, the agency of collage can be presented as a potential method for historical researchers in contested spaces where historical narratives proliferate. It inherently facilitates the collection of diverse interpretations of contested spaces within a single source and encourages multiple readings of these interpretations. Such an approach can foster a collaborative environment in historical research, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of complex historical narratives.

In this chapter, the complex and controversial history of Cyprus has steered the creation of collages, using fragments to depict crucial concepts and events related to the Cyprus Problem. Moreover, the process of making these collages raised questions about the interpretive potential of these fragments, a topic that will be further explored in the next section. These inquiries have led to the development of narratives that explore contested fragments within disputed spaces. The subsequent chapter will shift focus to the 'contested marks of the city,' delving into how urban spaces in Cyprus embody and reflect Nicosia's contested past.

Chapter 4

The Impact of Conflict on Nicosia

Imaginative collages

This chapter opens with the following question, introduced above:

How can experimental collage-making be used to understand the divided city of Nicosia?

This chapter is thus centred around the use of experimental collage-making to explore the complexities of Nicosia, as divided both physically and historically. It develops the first sequence of collages focused on the divided history of Cyprus. By concentrating on fragments of the city, it seeks to understand the multifaceted nature of Nicosia. The capital city of Cyprus, Nicosia remains divided into two parts, with Turkish Cypriots residing in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south, separated by the Buffer Zone¹ or Green Line controlled by the United Nations. The city's character is deeply ingrained with the scars of its past conflicts, presenting a rich multitude of narratives with continue to resonate today.

Through the medium of collage, this chapter embarks on an exploration of the marks left in Nicosia's urban fabric, weaving them into compositions that narrate the city's stories. This exploration emphasises the potential of collage-making as an experimental means of understanding complex urban contexts. By retracing and visually capturing impressions within the cityscape, these are then transformed into collages that illuminate Nicosia's multifaceted dimensions. This creative process not only juxtaposes various narratives of the city but also demonstrates how collage can offer insights into contested spaces. The chapter details the process of transforming these traces into interpretative collage images.

¹ The line in Cyprus that divided the island in two has been known by various names: the UN buffer zone, the Green Line, the No Man's Zone, the forbidden zone, and the Atilla Line.

The chapter's collages also draw inspiration from "Clarice", one of the imaginary cities in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*.² It became an inspiration while I remained unable to visit Nicosia due to Covid-19, when Nicosia existed for me only in my imagination. Clarice is a city that has experienced repeated destruction and reconstruction, similar to Nicosia's layered history. A collage begun while reading about Clarice evolved into a narrative about Nicosia and shaped this chapter. As I scratched and scribbled over the words in this collage, I developed a story about Nicosia, mindful not to detach it completely from Calvino's Clarice. Although both cities have their unique stories, Calvino's words resonate enough to narrate Nicosia.

This collage process can also be seen as the interpretation of the concept of *sous rature* or writing under erasure, a technique used by philosophers Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, where words are partially erased but remain visible.³ This method, as literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak notes, acknowledges the limitations and inherent distortions of language in capturing complex ideas. She notes, "In examining familiar things, we come to such unfamiliar conclusions that our very language is twisted and bent even as it guides us. Writing 'under erasure' is the mark of this contortion".⁴ Heidegger also points out that the literal and figurative meanings of words can often be misleading, and erasing or crossing out words is an invitation to re-examine their roots.⁵ This process of *sous rature* is not just a literary device but an invitation to explore alternative modes of thought, using words in ways that are different yet interconnected. For this collage, texts are transformed into visual narratives by the act of scribbling over them, thereby creating a dialogue between the written word of Clarice and the visual imagery of Nicosia. Therefore, the collages that emerged following this initial collage also adhere to the traces of this process. In creating them, I interchangeably used fragments of Nicosia to offer visual narratives about the city. While these collages depict Nicosia, they are not literal representations; instead, they are imaginaries of the city.

Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter also uses a triadic narrative structure to present collage's relationship with urban fragments. However, unlike the previous chapter, it begins with the reflective interpretation of the collage-making process, complemented by the diary voice in green font in the margins. These two processes then guide the research on Nicosia,

2 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (London: Vintage, 1997), 106–8.

3 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Corrected (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

4 Spivak Gayatri Chakravorty, "Translator's Preface", in *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), xiv.

5 Matthew King, *Heidegger and Happiness: Dwelling on Fitting and Being*, *Heidegger and Happiness: Dwelling on Fitting and Being* (London: Continuum, 2009).; Matthew King, "Heidegger's Etymological Method: Discovering Being by Recovering the Richness of the Word", *Philosophy Today* 51, no. 3 (2007).

providing a description of the third narrative element, the city's investigation. This method has evolved directly from the collage-making process of this chapter, beginning with the search for city fragments, followed by the collage process, and finally, the interpretation of the collage guiding the city research. Therefore, the collage-making process also forms the structure of this chapter.

After presenting the story of ~~Clarence~~ ^{Nicosia}, this chapter explores Nicosia through five collaged stories, each representing different narratives associated with the city and created using diverse collage-making techniques. These collaged narratives progress from a macro scale of maps to a micro-scale of points, providing insight into the fabric of the city. Through these narratives, the collaged images introduce Nicosia, supported by the literature. The first story depicts the city's layered history by tracing its outlines from maps originating from different periods. The artefact illustrates the diverse strata of the city through transparent layers of collaged composition. The second collage experiment also follows the marks on the map, leading to the narrative about the visible and invisible borders of the walled city, revealing that they have shaped over time. This work incorporates the addition of colour to the cut-and-paste technique. The third collage provides a close examination of the border images, highlighting how they reflect the language of the city shaped by its contested environment. The fourth collage brings attention to the border itself by emphasising the walls that define it. Through questioning the meaning of the forbidden zone, this collage explores the potential of the no man's land for the city, using cut-and-paste fragments from past and present images. The final collage wonders beyond the border, questioning its existence and exploring the creative potentials of the region despite political constraints. It is applied with the cut-and-paste technique on a single image with grid drawing.

This restriction on travel imposed by Covid-19 highlighted for me collage's capacity to work physical boundaries, offering the potential to envision and imagine a city without visiting it in person. As such, the images presented in this chapter explore Nicosia through the lens of imagination, shaped by my thoughts about the city. Hence, I refer to these collages as an imagination of Nicosia.

Echoes from Calvino

^{Nicosia}
~~Clarice~~, the glorious city, has a tormented history. Several times it decayed, then burgeoned again, always keeping the first ^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~ as an unparalleled model of every splendor, compared to which the city's recent state can only arouse more sighs at every fading of the stars.

In its centuries of decadence, emptied by plagues, its height reduced by collapsing beams and cornices and by shifts of the terrain, rusted and stopped up through neglect or the lack of maintenance men, the city slowly became populated again as the survivors emerged from the basements and lairs, in hordes, swarming like rats, driven by their fury to rummage and gnaw, and yet also to collect and patch, like nesting birds. They grabbed everything that could be taken from where it was and put it in another place to serve a different use: brocade curtains ended up as sheets; in marble funerary urns they planted basil; wrought-iron gratings torn from the harem windows were used for roasting cat-meat on fires of inlaid wood. Put together with odd bits of the useless ^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~, a survivors' ^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~ was taking shape, all huts and hovels, festering sewers, rabbit cages. And yet, almost nothing was lost of ^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~'s former splendor; it was all there, merely arranged in a different order, no less appropriate to the inhabitants' needs than it had been before.

The days of poverty were followed by more joyous times: a sumptuous butterfly-^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~ emerged from the beggared chrysalis-^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~. The new abundance made the city overflow with new materials, buildings, objects; new people flocked in from outside; nothing, no one had any connection with the former ^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~, or ^{Nicosias}~~Clarices~~. And the more the new city settled triumphantly into the place and the name of the first ^{Nicosia}~~Clarice~~, the more it realized it was

moving away from it, destroying it no less rapidly than the rats and the mold. Despite its pride in its new wealth, the city, at heart, felt itself incongruous, alien, a usurper.

And then the shards of the original splendor that had been saved, by adapting them to more obscure needs, were again shifted. They were now preserved under glass bells, locked in display cases, set on velvet cushions, and not because they might still be used for anything, but because people wanted to reconstruct through them a city of which no one knew anything now.

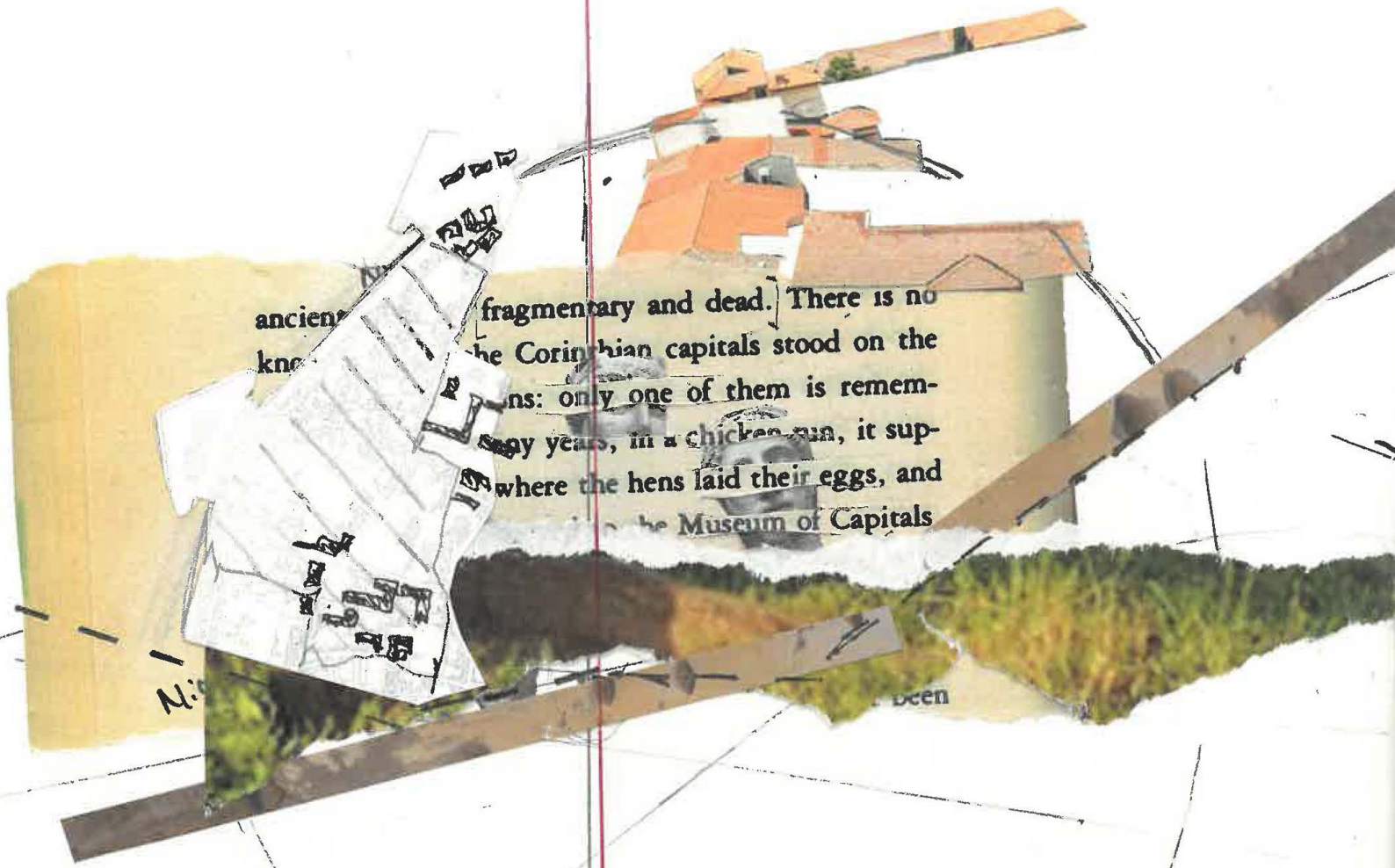
More decadences, more burgeonings have followed one another in ^{Nicosia}Clarice. Populations and customs have changed several times; the name, the site, and the objects hardest to break remain. Each new ^{Nicosia}Clarice, compact as a living body with its smells and its breath, shows off, like a gem, what remains of the ancient ^{Nicosias}Clarices, fragmentary and dead. There is no knowing when the Corinthian capitals stood on the top of their columns: only one of them is remembered, since for many years, in a chicken run, it supported the basket where the hens laid their eggs, and from there it was moved to the Museum of Capitals, in line with other specimens of the collection. The order of the era's succession has been lost; that a first ^{Nicosia}Clarice existed is a widespread belief, but there are no proofs to support it. The capitals would have been in the chicken runs before they were in the temples, the marble urns could have been planted with basil before they were filled with dead bones. Only this is known for sure: a given number of objects is shifted within a given space, at times submerged by a quantity of new objects, at times worn out and not replaced; the rule is to shuffle them each time, then try to assemble them. Perhaps ^{Nicosia}Clarice has always been only a confusion of chipped gimcracks, ill-assorted, obsolete.⁶

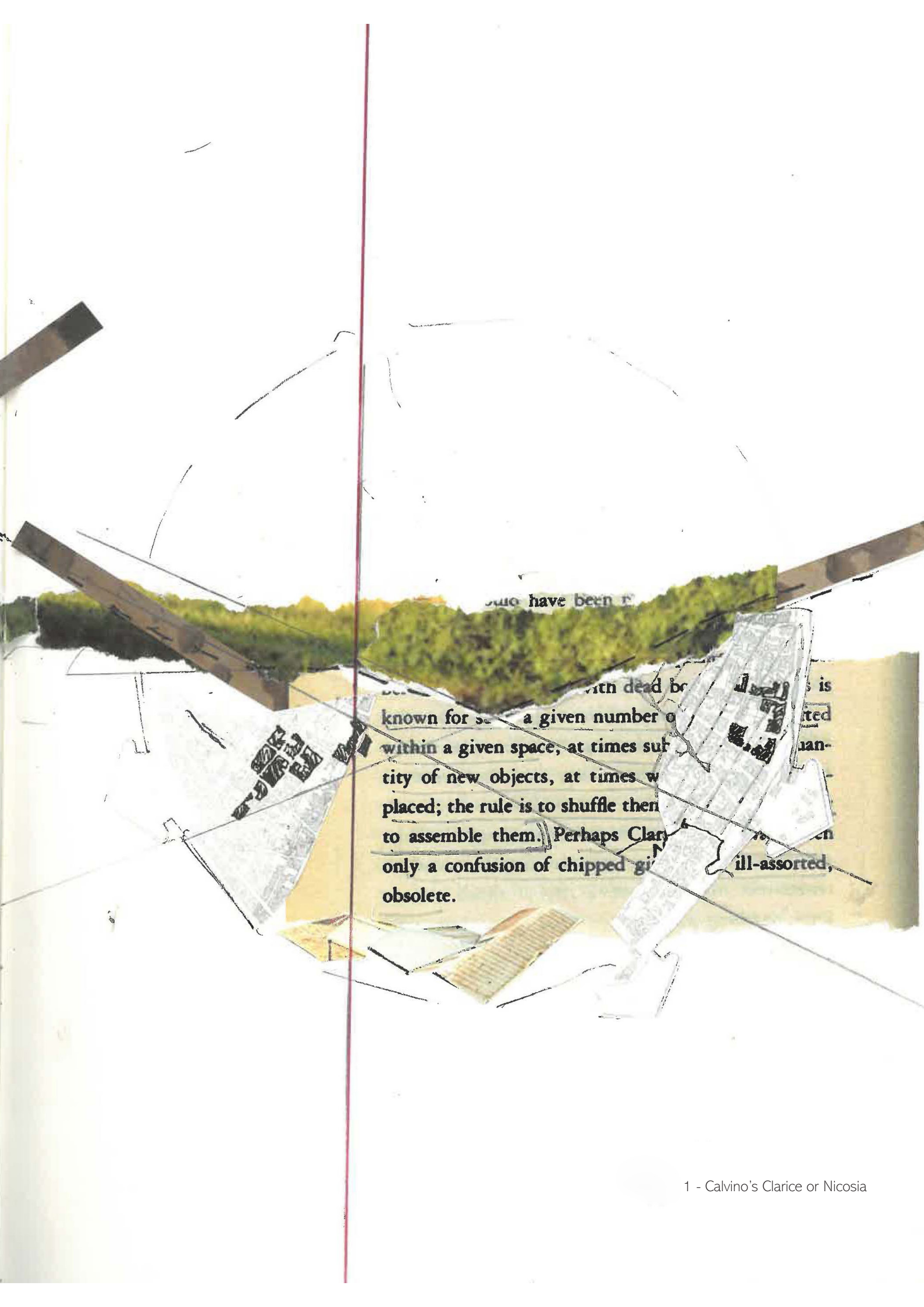
6 Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 106–8.

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Like Calvino's Clarice, Nicosia is a city with a complex and layered texture characterised by migrations, conflicts, and social, economic, and political debates that have contributed to its unique cultural and social structure. As the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia has served as a shared space for many societies, each bringing their unique customs, traditions, and ways of life. Despite its turbulent past, Nicosia has managed to preserve much of 'its former splendour'. With every era, its urban fabric has become increasingly diverse, creating a rich and unique urban memory.

However, Nicosia's complex history, along with economic and political instability, and cultural issues, have led to a fragmented city texture. The Venetian Walls still mark the boundaries of the medieval city, while the ongoing conflict between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities has had a lasting impact on the city's urban fabric. The Buffer Zone, a United Nations-controlled military area, serves as a stark reminder of this division, separating the southern Greek Cypriot part of the city from the northern Turkish part. Abandoned objects, ruins, cars, and debris can be found in the Walled City and the Buffer Zone, where many streets featuring houses are divided into two. However, these objects and spaces not only represent the fragmental nature of the city but also serve as a reminder of the city's stories and how these fragments are perceived in relation to it.

In *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch explores the memory and imagination of the city, which he discusses as a physical object that can create an image in the observer's mind.⁷ He proposes a model of interpreting the city comprising five components: the road, the node, the landmark, the district, and the edge. Although some critics, like Barthes, argue that Lynch's approach is reductive and fails to account for the emotional associations people have with various parts of the city,⁸ Lynch stresses that the imaginability of a city is crucial in understanding its urban space and forms, which depends on individual's ability to comprehend and interpret the environment, assigning meaning to it.

Fragments, on the other hand, directly connect the city with one's imagination, as noted by Woods. The fragments enhance the imaginability of space, reflecting the city's history, culture, and texture. They achieve this by juxtaposing visual elements from the city's boundaries, buildings, streets, inhabitants, and natural features. In Woods' Sarajevo project, he also first interpreted the city's fragments before proposing his architectural reconstruction. He offered these fragments to guide the rebuilding of the war-damaged city. Similarly, the process of creating collages is experimental,

7 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Publications of the Joint Center for Urban Studies (Cambridge [Mass.: Technology Press, 1960).

8 Roland Barthes, "Elements of Semiology", *Linguistics*, no. 1964 (1964).

uniting fragments of the city's memory and presenting an alternate view of self-identity. Thus, this chapter also highlights the potential of collage as an alternative medium for understanding the city through the images of the city. Therefore, in this chapter, following the experimental collages, I compare my collage experimentation with literature research and historical sources to understand better Nicosia's multi-layered historical, cultural, and social structure, offering an alternative perspective on the city's self-identity and providing insight into its current state.

The series of collages presented in this section embodies an experimental exploration I called 'reveries', which echo the narratives of Nicosia. As introduced before, these reveries transcend mere dreams or metaphorical constructs. Instead, they manifest as tangible and authentic experiences. In this series, the process of collage-making delves even deeper into a subjective interpretation of the city, a method that not only envisions Nicosia but also comprehends and dreams through its fragments. They offer spatial and visual arrangements, each layer disclosing historical, cultural, and social narratives inherent to the urban landscape. Simultaneously, these collages serve as catalysts, igniting the imagination and memories of the collagist to weave an imaginary Nicosia from the fragments of its buildings, ruins, and urban landscapes. Yet, this imaginary Nicosia is not a flight of fancy. It exists within the realm of reverie, where reality and fantasy harmonize, and where the boundaries of contested spaces, though present, are not constraints but rather invitations to envisage a Nicosia that transcends them.

Northern Cyprus is the territory of the Turks and Southern Cyprus is the territory of the Greeks, which the border area deemed no man's land. The former owners of the places are no longer physically present, but they are still present in the form of material artefacts, houses, and marks they have left behind and they have been through. Through their presence, all these fragmental things in the remaining spaces exert influence on all areas of life, including politics, socio-culture and economics. In this chapter, I argue that these marks have an effect that can be detected and analysed through the fragments of collage-making in Nicosia, like a reverie. Thus, my aim is to delve into the narratives of Nicosia's layered texture by following its fragments.

Narratives of Nicosia

Narrative 1: The Walls of Nicosia



2 - The Walls of Nicosia

To understand the city, I first started to research maps of Nicosia. My initial investigation involved studying maps from different periods, each characterised by unique subject matter and markings. Notably, most of these maps display the Venetian walls, while more recent maps indicated two distinct traces dividing the city along the east-west and north-south axes.

10 - From my research diary on 16 March 2022.

I have many maps from different times. They are all for the same city, yet they vary significantly. The historical ones lack a division border in the middle but feature Venetian walls. Instead of a dividing line, they show a river flowing through the heart of the city. Some maps show only half, leaving the other side as a void, as if life ceases beyond the division...As an architecture student, I know I can learn from maps. However, in this case, I wonder how much more I can learn about Nicosia.

It seems that in Nicosia, everything is inherently political. Even the maps, with their various versions, convey distinct narratives. Despite the parallel lives within the city, the maps only portray one perspective deliberately. So, when I cut fragments from the maps, I hope to gain deeper insights into the city. Yet, I'm uncertain about the process of my collage-making. In my collage, I aim to explore Nicosia beyond mere analysis, inspired by Le Corbusier's idea of transparency. I used map fragments to reveal the city's layers- Venetian walls, north-south axes, borders, and historical sites like churches and mosques. Some appear to have changed, while others remain unchanged. It's intriguing to see the disparities within such a compact city. I select fragments from different maps- Venetian walls from one, the main north-south line and the border from others. They don't just represent lines or structures; they embody information about the city. This leads me to question what these lines signify and what they represent for the city. I incorporate additional fragments, such as signs, images, and marks. Each layer contributes something distinctive - one reveals texture, another the Venetian wall, another displays signs from the border, and the final one features soldiers and jets associated with NATO. While I'm not entirely happy with the outcome, I'm pleased with the concept of representing all fragments through different layers. Each composition can convey a distinct message. It's not fixed; it encompasses numerous stories.

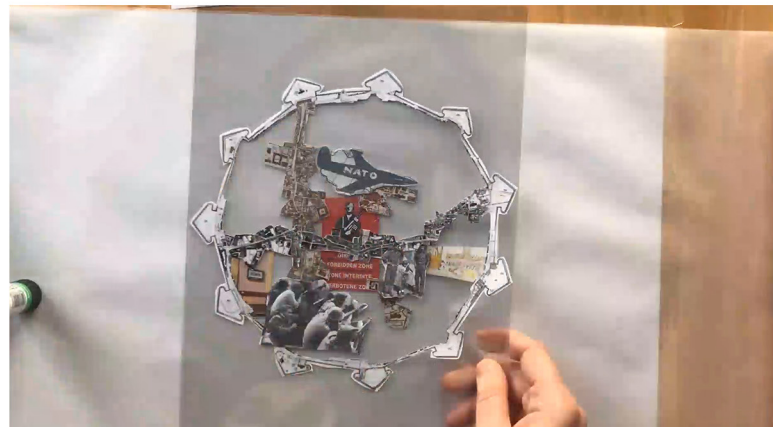
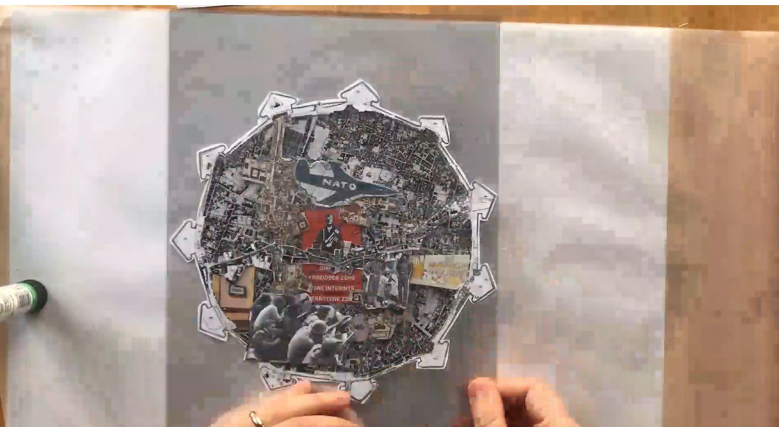
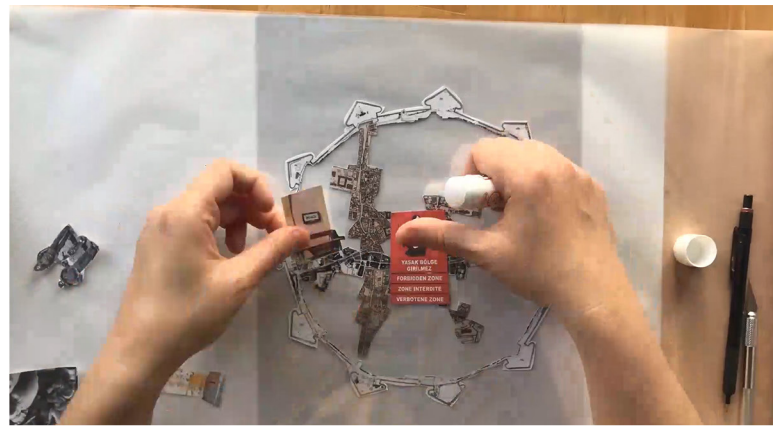
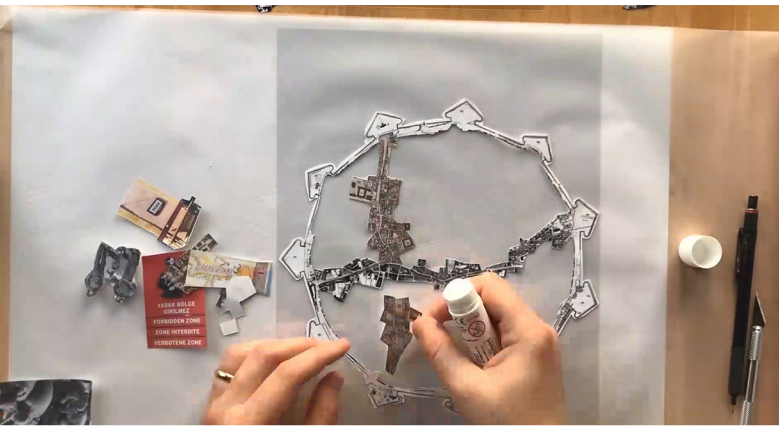
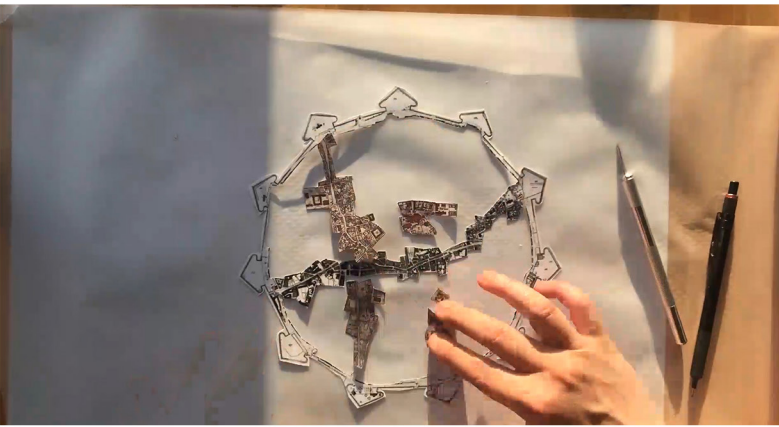
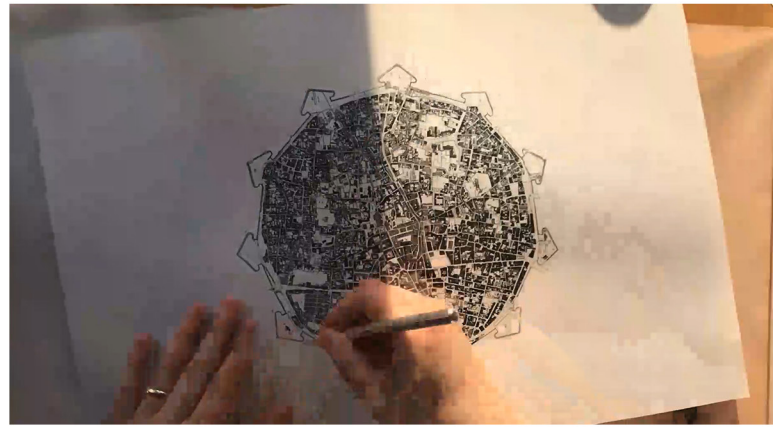
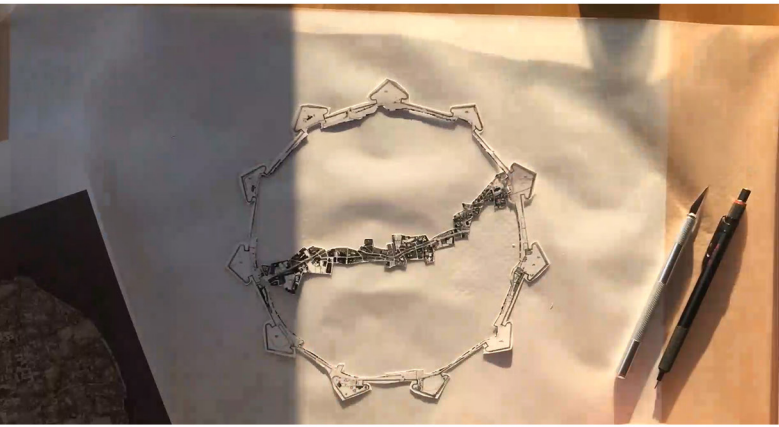
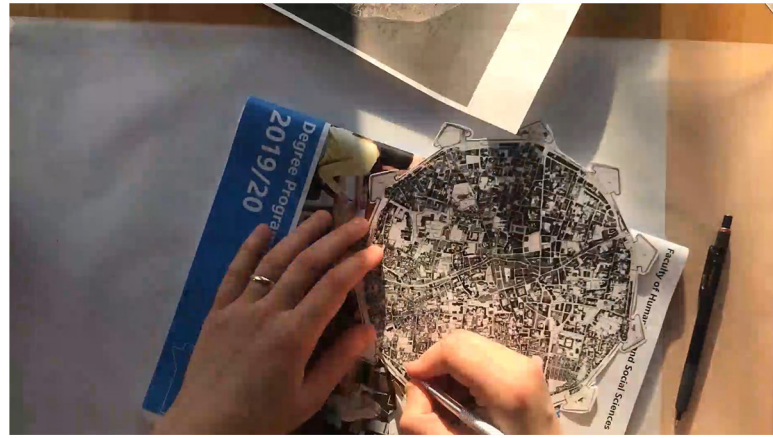
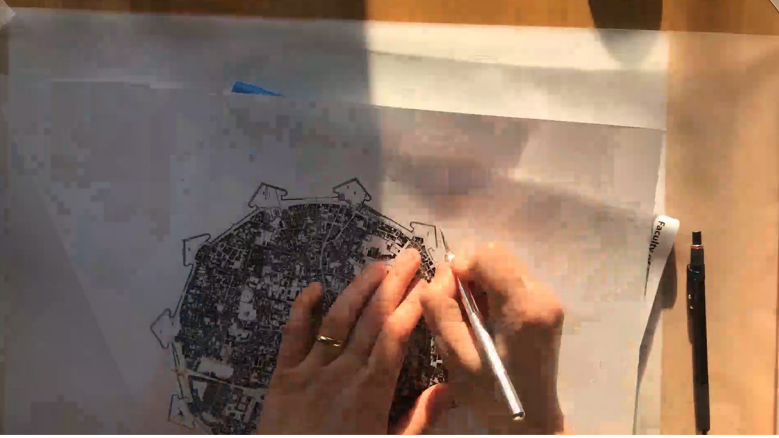
To create the collage, I traced the markings on the maps and utilised transparent sheets. This approach allowed me to capture the historical and geographical features of Nicosia. Within the city's cartographic representations, three distinct markings emerged as focal points. First, the Venetian Walls, originating from medieval times, symbolised the city as an 'ideal city' of historical importance.⁹ Second, the division line of the Walled City, known as the 'Buffer Zone,' previously following a stream bed, now serves as a demarcation line dividing the city into two parts. Finally, the north-south axis, consistently appearing on nearly every map, indicates the primary commercial route between the walled city's gates, playing a pivotal role in its development. Additionally, I added some fragments to create a story. By adding fragments obtained from following the map markings, such as depictions of soldiers, military imagery, and signs, I sought to enhance my understanding of the Buffer Zone. Its ambiguous nature as a border, with houses and blocked streets, necessitated the inclusion of additional fragments for clearer interpretation.¹⁰

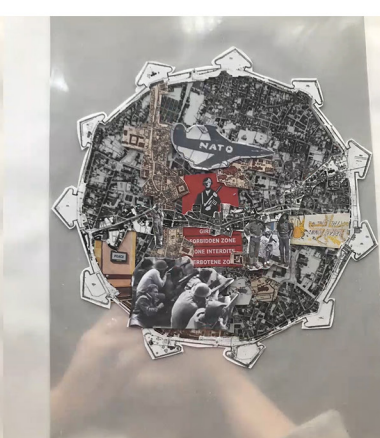
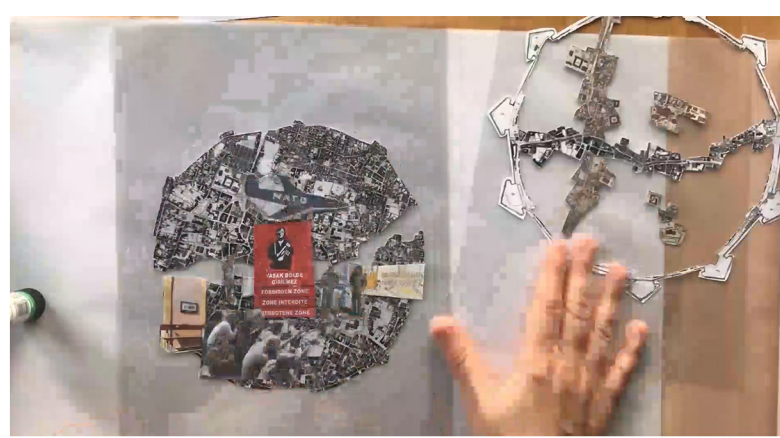
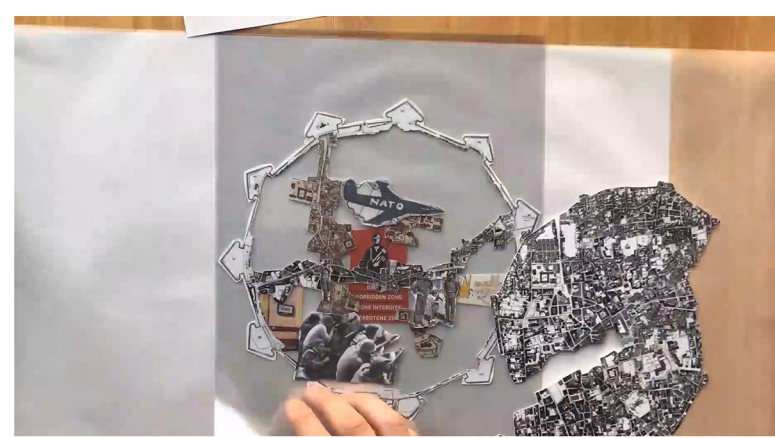
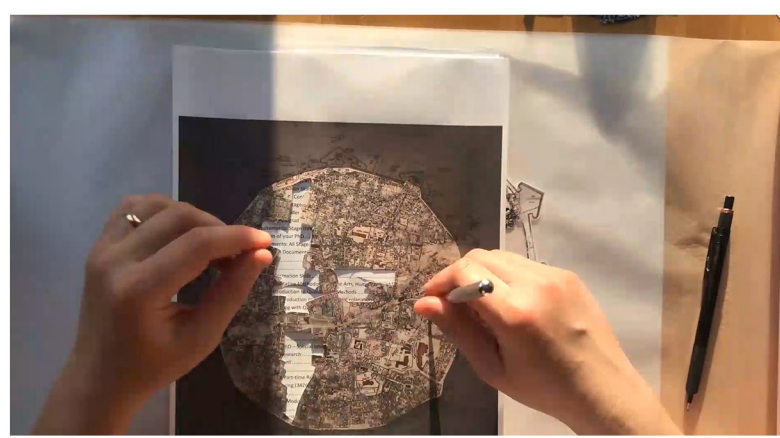
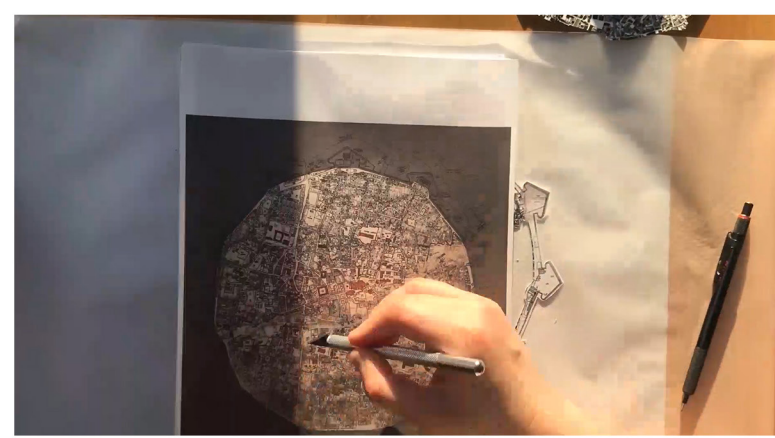
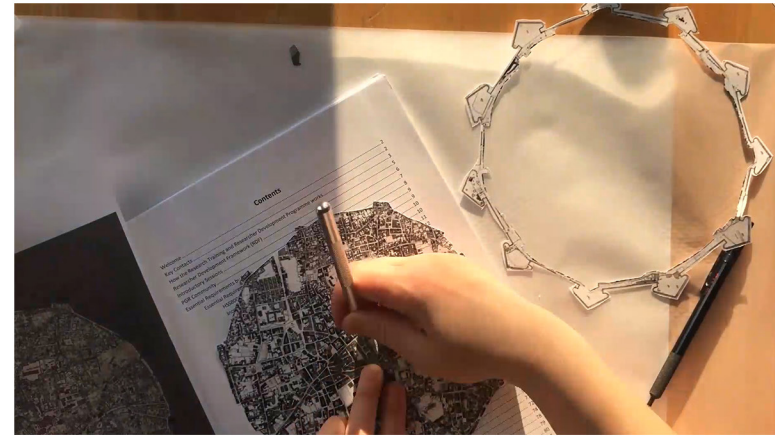
The collage design deliberately fosters a sense of playfulness.¹¹ Each sheet contains diverse fragments that can be interchanged, enabling the creation of alternative narratives about the city. The composition comprises distinct layers, with the initial layer highlighting the most prominent markings, the subsequent layer incorporating fragments that transform these markings into cohesive stories involving soldiers, people, signs, and tracks, and the final layer displaying a fragmented map depicting the divided sections of the city. Removing the final layer exposes the easily recognisable city walls while excluding intermediate fragments provides a historical map of the city during different periods. Exhibiting the first and second layers together allows for an in-depth exploration of the historical conflict. Ultimately, considering all layers simultaneously offers diverse interpretations and implications of the city's complex historical layers.

As seen in the collage, all the fragments represent the layers of Nicosia that changed through its history. While these fragments are the main focal points of the city's urban fabric, they also represent different periods, causes and consequences that contribute to Nicosia's multi-layered identity. A collage bringing these fragments together is, therefore, an invitation to reflect on the complexity of the city's layers and the historical, social, political and functional

9 James Madge, *Sabbioneta: Cryptic City* (London: Bibliotheque McLean, 2011).

11 For alternative versions of this collage, please see the appendix II.





elements that have shaped it. As an invitee to this collage, I focussed on the histories and meanings of these fragments within the city and conducted my research around them. [2]

Nicosia as Capital

Nicosia has been the capital of Cyprus for over ten centuries and is a testament to the island's rich cultural heritage. Throughout its long history, the city has been ruled by various empires, including the Byzantine, Lusignan, Venetian, Ottoman and British. Today, Nicosia remains a divided capital, with the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus occupying the southern and northern sides, respectively. In 1989, the Walled City of Nicosia was declared a conservation area in the Nicosia Master Plan.¹²

Nicosia became the capital of Cyprus during the Byzantine period in the 10th century AD. Later, during the Middle Ages, Nicosia served as the capital of the Lusignan feudal rule from 1192 to 1489, which enabled the city to grow into a western medieval metropolis, attracting nobles, merchants and clergy to settle there. Under the Venetian rule from 1489 to 1579, the city walls were built, which still stand today. They were designed by the Venetian fortress engineer Giulio Savorgnano to protect the city from Ottoman attacks, and in 1567, the walls were built in their present form.¹³ The layout and orientation of the gates were aligned with the course of the Pedios River, which flows through Nicosia. During the subsequent Ottoman rule (1570-1878), the city underwent significant development to become a modern capital, focusing on improving its infrastructure and the quality of its residential neighbourhoods. At that time, the city was only accessible through three gates: Giuliana, San Domenico, and Del Proveditore, now known as Famagusta, Pafos and Kyrenia Gates, respectively, with specific timings, opening at sunset and closing at sunset.¹⁴

During the British colonial period, the Venetian walls became exceeded as the colonial administrative offices were relocated outside the walled city. This relocation led to changes in the city organisations, creating sites around the core. Consequently, the gates on the walls lost their role as control points. In the northern part of the city, the Kyrenia Gate was modified by demolishing the walls of the gate to provide a wider passage. In the southern part, a new entrance was constructed, which is now known as Metaxas Street and Eleftheria Square but was popularly referred to as the Limassol Gate. These

12 Derya Oktay, "An Analysis and Review of the Divided City of Nicosia, Cyprus, and New Perspectives", *Geography*, 2007.

13 Gordon Home, *Cyprus: Then and Now* (London: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1960).

14 Christos Hadjichristos, "Cyprus: Nicosia and Its D-visions", *Architectural Design* 76, no. 3 (2006): 12–19.

modifications at both ends of the Venetian walls encouraged the growth of the city beyond the walls, establishing a major north-south urban axis that facilitated the natural expansion of commercial activity. This transformation created a clear division between the historic and modern parts of the city, with the historic walls becoming a threshold, marking the boundary between these two parts.¹⁵

After independence in 1960, Nicosia remained the capital of Cyprus. However, the boundaries and meaning of the city, defined by the walls surrounding it, underwent significant changes as a result of political disputes between the Greek and Turkish communities. The ensuing civil war exacerbated the city's social, economic and political divisions. In 1963, a provisional border was established in the centre of the city, known as the 'Green Line'. Later, in 1974, this line became a permanent border, known as the 'Buffer Zone', separating Turkish Cypriots in the north from Greek Cypriots in the south, controlled by the United Nations. The division line was created by using properties, shops, garden walls and roads in designated areas. The gaps along this surface were filled with found materials, creating a lifeless zone in the centre of the city and disrupting its integrity.¹⁶

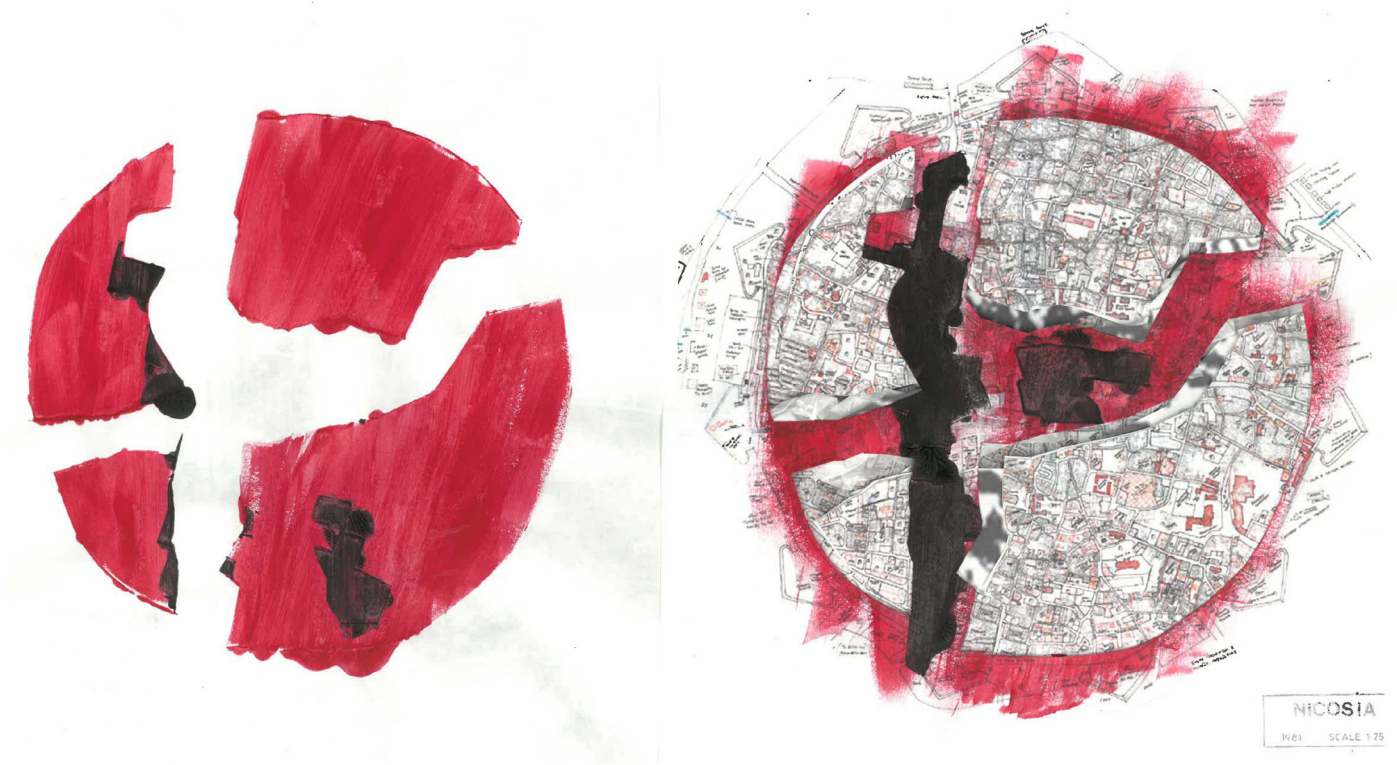
The fragments within the collage - the Venetian walls, the 'Buffer Zone' and the dynamic north-south axis - each serve as key points that offer glimpses into different phases of the city's history. Over time, these points have become the city's boundaries, emerging at different times and serving different purposes. Additional fragments interspersed between the layers of the collage allude to the political, historical, and geographical aspects underlying these demarcated territories. The collage initiates initial research inquiries into these walls, providing a roadmap for further investigation. This research expands upon the collage by using the information gleaned from these fragments to offer a visual representation of the city's layers over time.

When the collage and historical research converge, the layers of Nicosia coalesce into a narrative that enriches the inquiry. The collage, composed of fragments of maps from different time periods, provides fundamental insights into the city's intricate past, providing a guiding framework for the research. In turn, this research bestows significance upon the ostensibly static fragments within the collage. Together, research through collage, the merging visual representation and the historical account of its evolution as a

15 Resmiye Alpar Atun and Naciye Doratli, "Walls in Cities: A Conceptual Approach to the Walls of Nicosia", *Geopolitics* 14, no. 1 (2009).

16 Oktay, "An Analysis and Review of the Divided City of Nicosia, Cyprus, and New Perspectives."

capital city uncover the multifaceted layers that characterise Nicosia. This combined perspective sheds light on Nicosia's transition from an idealised medieval enclave to a contemporary capital marked by historical division.



4 - The Boundaries 1-2

Narrative 2: The Boundaries

In contrast to previous works involving making collages with maps, this collage takes a different approach.¹⁷ I began by gradually removing fragments from the maps. My starting point was the Venetian walls, constructed in 1567 to protect the city from the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, I removed the Buffer Zone, which has been inaccessible since 1974, followed by the removal of the line dividing Nicosia east-west on a medieval map. I continued this process until only the most visible areas of the city remained, resulting in a number of divisions within the boundaries of the Venetian walls.

The narrative of this collage suggests that the city contains more divisions than just the Buffer Zone. While the Buffer Zone serves as the most prominent boundary and plays a significant role in defining the city's divisions, the collage raises questions about the additional divisions present in Nicosia. I have therefore concentrated my research on these intermediate zones. [4]

17 - From my research diary on 16 March 2022.

Once again, I find myself immersed in maps. Given my background in architecture, delving into maps is my initial step towards truly comprehending a city. On my table, an array of materials awaits – tissue paper, tracing paper, glue, and brushes. I lack a concrete plan for this collage, but let's embark on this journey and see what unfolds...I fixate on the borderline once more. It's intriguing to acknowledge the existence of a void in the heart of the city, a space deemed off-limits.

It appears as a mere illustration on the map, yet in reality, it signifies a tangible, restricted area. I strive to envisage this space. I carefully affix various materials, aiming to render them more conspicuous. On paper, it remains a two-dimensional sketch, but in reality...In the map I'm scrutinising, the border zone oddly appears somewhat

faded. The hues in that section are softer as if someone attempted to erase it, yet the underlying presence persists. It's akin to a mark on the body – wounded, but with the healing potential. Ironically, I placed a tissue over it, a gesture towards aiding its recovery. But I did not like what I had. I return to the maps once more. I lay my hands on the oldest one, revealing Venetian Walls. I cut out the entire walled city, leaving me with a pristine circle. From another map, I extracted the axes. Instead of utilising fragments, I opt for negatives and apply the colour- red. It dawns on me that by removing the fragments, I effectively obliterate the city's boundaries. I erased not only the gap but also the moat of the Venetian walls and the north-south axes line. Though this axe is not an overt gap, it symbolises the long-forgotten economic divide. Once one of the liveliest streets, it now languishes in desolation, merely intersected by the border. Despite my initial perplexity in approaching this collage, it evolved into something beyond my imagination. As I infuse it with colour, it begins to convey a message, something about the city. It starts to unveil the city's limits through the gaps it represents. Perhaps it's the intensity of red, a colour laden with gravity, that imparts this gravitas.

The Walled City's visible and invisible frontiers

The Walled City of Nicosia has been a significant site for conflict negotiation throughout the island's history. It is a fortified enclave that has witnessed numerous inter-communal conflicts, including the highly charged conflicts of 1958, 1963, and 1974, and it continues to serve as a potent symbol of the deep-rooted division characterising Cyprus. The capital can also be characterised by the various frontiers that have emerged throughout its history. The Venetian fortifications, originally the city's boundary, are one of the most distinctive marks of the city. Although it was exceeded during British rule and is no longer a real city border, it is still recognised as the old city's boundary. For both sides of the island, it remains the boundary between the old and new towns. Although most of the Venetian fortifications are accessible, some part of it is located in the Buffer Zone and is controlled by the United Nations. Nonetheless, it still symbolises a strong boundary marking the old Nicosia.

The Buffer Zone, defined in 1974, also represents a physical border occupying a portion of the Walled City, which separates different interpretations of the past within the city. Despite its historical significance, there is limited information about this mark and the way of life it once encompassed. As Yiannis Papadakis, Cypriot researcher and academic specialising in the history and politics of Cyprus, notes, it was “a line crosses walled Nicosia in medieval maps – another line in contemporary ones. They more or less coincide, crossing the city on an east-west axis. On medieval maps, this was a river, a natural divide that later turned into a human-made divide. Even though the river later became a bridge, once again, through human effort, it turned into a chasm, a dangerous ‘no-man's land’: a Dead Zone”.¹⁸

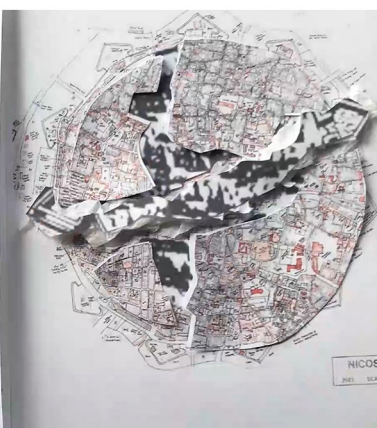
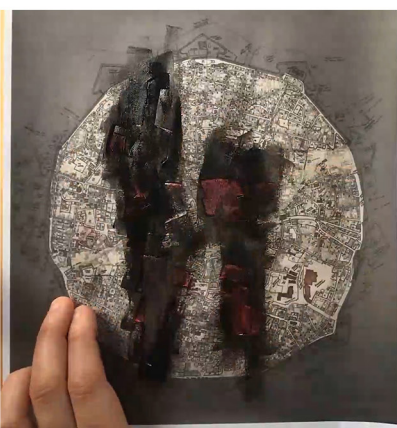
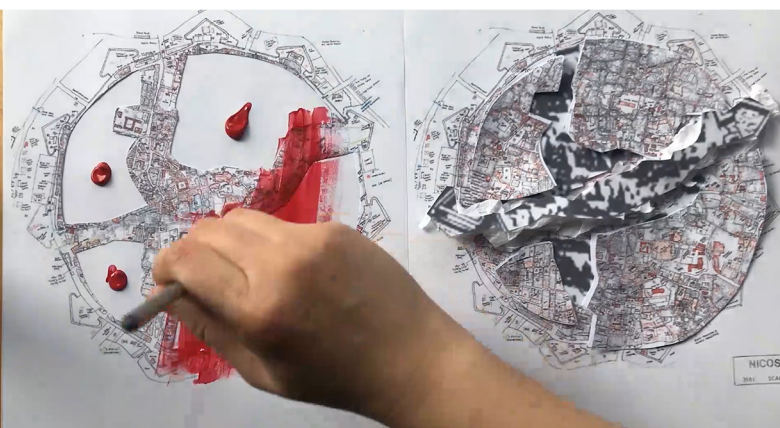
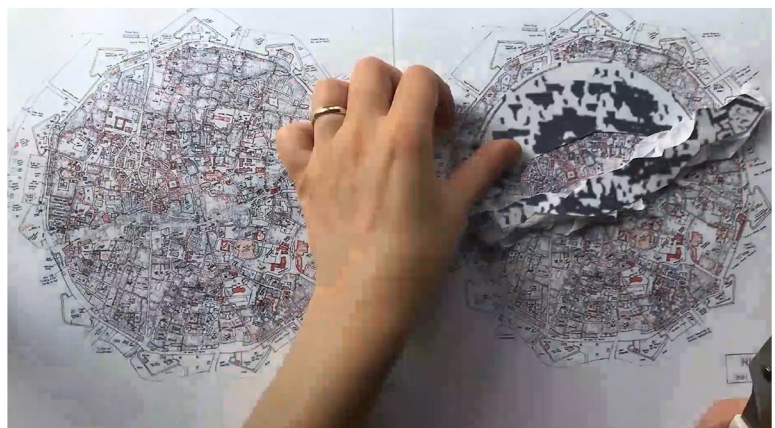
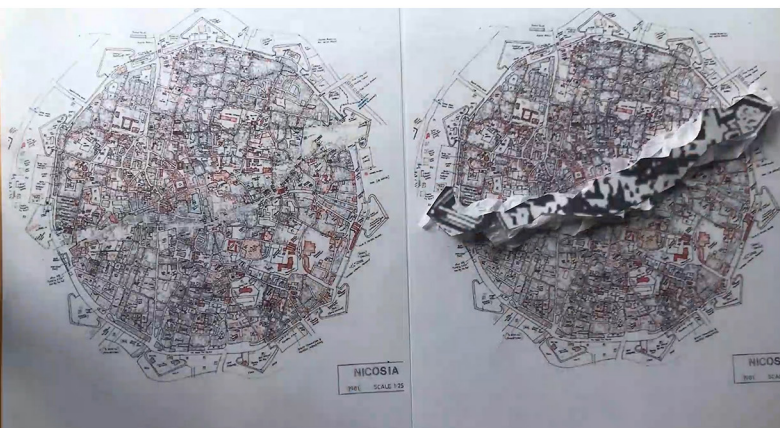
My visual research of the maps for the collage experiment also shows that what is shown on the maps to be a riverbed was later transformed into an inner-city road and later into the city's main shopping street, called Hermes Street,¹⁹ frequented by all Cypriots.²⁰ After the division, however, it became a frozen space in time, a tangible manifestation of the lasting legacy of the conflict and a gap preserving knowledge about the common way of life it at one time encapsulated. So, it is a palimpsest “etched by the natural course of water that has governed social and political dynamics in Nicosia for centuries”.²¹

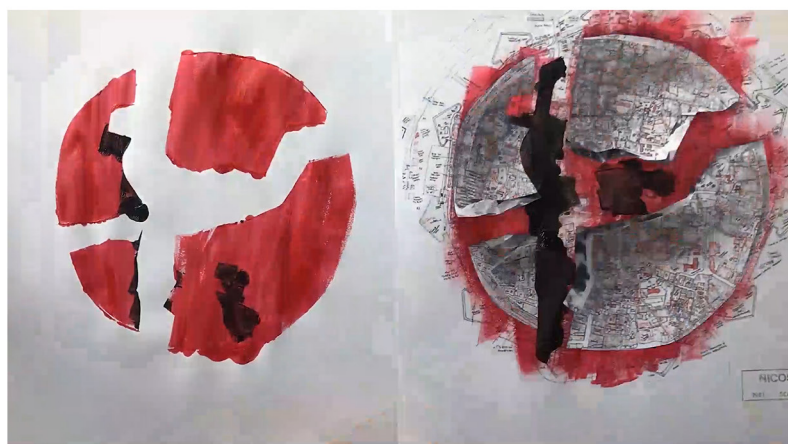
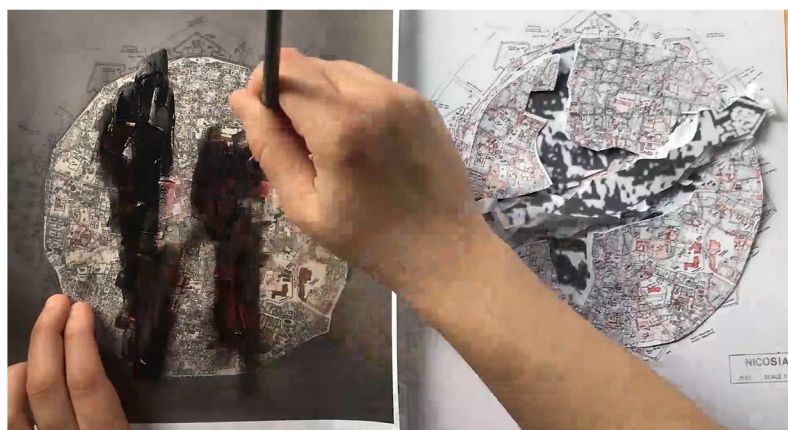
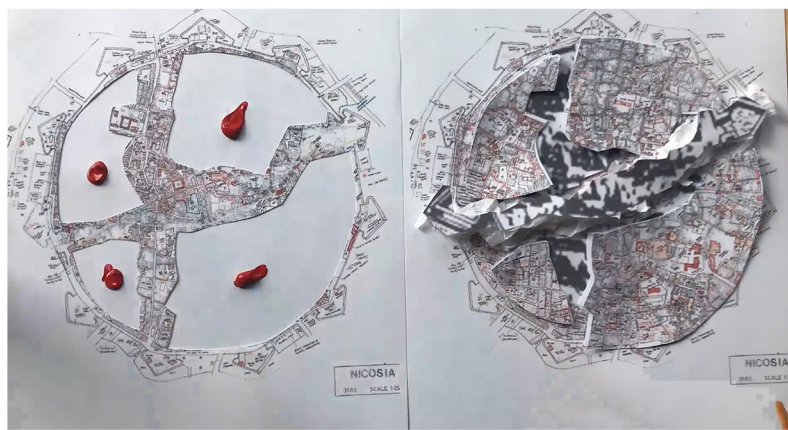
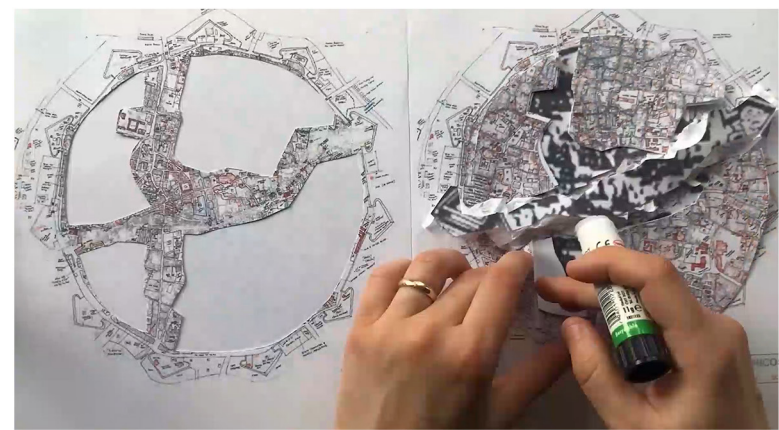
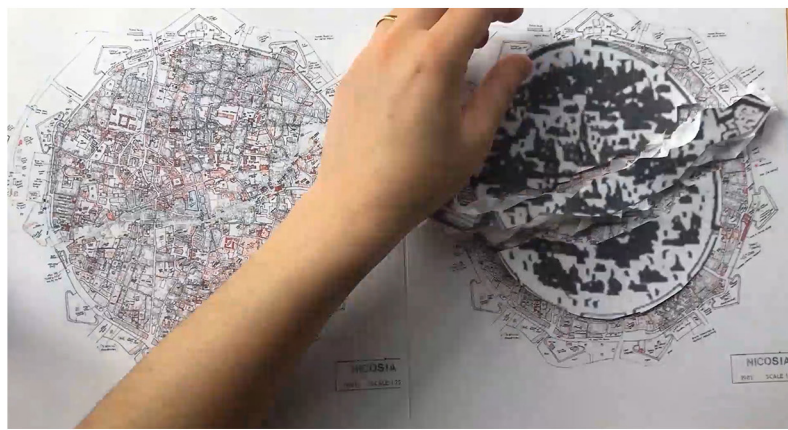
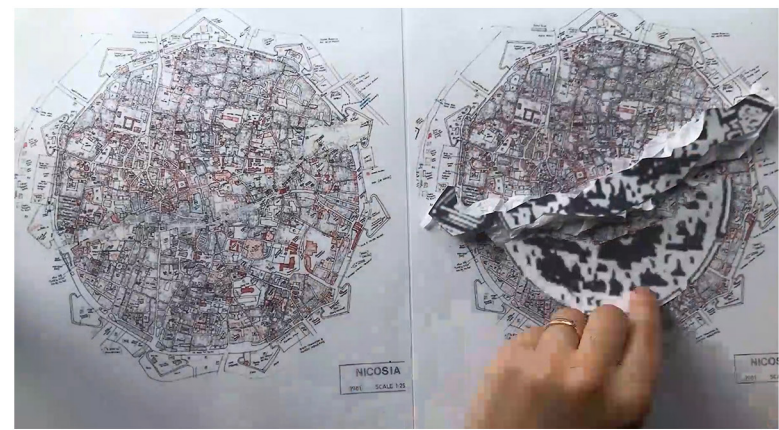
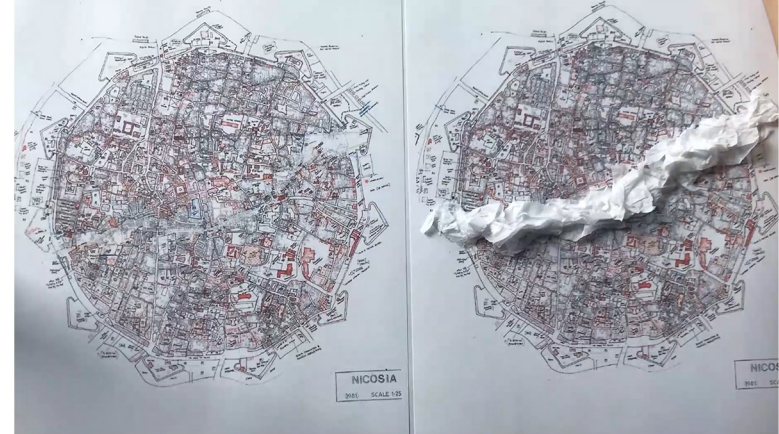
18 Yiannis Papadakis, “Nicosia after 1960: A River, A Bridge and a Dead Zone”, *GMI: Mediterranean Edition* 1, no. 1 (2006).

19 The name of this street is different on the maps. In English, it is Hermes Street. In Greek, it is Ermou; in Turkish, it is Ermu.

20 Anita Bakshi, *Topographies of Memories, Topographies of Memories*, 2017, 84.

21 Jon Calame and Ester Charlesworth, *Divided Cities : Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*, City in the Twenty-First Century Book Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 214.





Additionally, divided cities, such as Belfast, Mostar, Sarajevo, and Nicosia, are characterised by conflict resulting in boundaries. These boundaries are evident through barricades, checkpoints, and walls, which serve as tangible borders that separate groups of people. However, despite differences in their contested past and the unique nature of their conflicts, these cities share significant similarities. They all have complex, multi-layered boundaries extending beyond the physical borders shaped by national, ethnic, and economic differences.²² These intangible boundaries play a crucial role in shaping these cities' social, political, and economic texture. Throughout its troubled past, Cyprus has also witnessed a wide range of social, political and economic changes, reflected in the transformations within the Walled City.

The partition of the island and the economic, social, and political dynamics it brought with it, in particular the population shift between north and south and the migration from outside the island, and the new cultural experiences that resulted from it, affected the everyday life of Nicosia. However, these changes have also created new intra-communal boundaries that have manifested in social and economic inequalities and socio-spatial boundaries on both sides of the Buffer Zone that separates Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. Therefore, the Buffer Zone, which separates Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, is not the only boundary that has emerged in the Walled City after the division. As elucidated by Papadakis' research on the Tahtakallas migrant settlement in southern Nicosia, noted in *Echoes From The Dead Zone*, Greek Cypriots swiftly transformed involuntary refugees within their own land overnight, moving into homes that had previously belonged to Turkish Cypriots.²³ In the northern part of Nicosia, Yael observes in *The Make-Believe Space* that "Turkish Cypriots, in reconfiguring themselves as a middle class after the war, have defined the walled city now inhabited by migrants from Turkey and the elderly as that space where they will not go, the border of their identity, that adjoined other side, the counterpoint to their newly established middle-class sociality".²⁴

22 Anssi Paasi, "Boundaries as Social Processes: Territoriality in the World of Flows", *Geopolitics* 3, no. 1 (1998).

23 Yiannis Papadakis, *Echoes from the Dead Zone : Across the Cyprus Divide* (London ; New York : New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed in the U.S.A. by Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

24 Yael Navaro, *The Make-Believe Space, The Make-Believe Space*, 2020, 149–50.

Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's terminology,²⁵ the de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation in Cyprus have drastically altered the fabric of the city. They have created an invisible spatial boundary between those who have relocated and become migrants on the same island, those who have migrated from outside the island, and those who have never migrated at all: the separation of leisure, work and residence spaces of locals and migrants. Overall, the partition has had profound and lasting effects on Nicosia's social and cultural landscape, notably in the delineation of the Chrysalinitissa neighbourhood²⁶ in the south and the Arabahmet neighbourhood in the north as focal points of migrant settlement.²⁷

The collage implies that Nicosia experienced more fragmentation than solely the Buffer Zone. This particular method of collage-making has transformed the fragments into distinctive markings, suggesting regions within the layered map of Nicosia. It serves as a starting point for initial inquiry into these regions, providing a foundation for further research. Through referencing this representation, the ensuing research has delved into both the overt and covert boundaries of the Walled City.

In alignment with the collaged image, the research demonstrates that, apart from the conspicuous Buffer Zone and the enduring Venetian walls, the city housed two immigrant neighbourhoods that were defined post-partition. Although represented as markings in the collage, the research shows that these - the marking on the left signifies the Arabahmet neighbourhood in the north, and the area on the right designates the Tahtakalles/Chrysalinitissa migrant neighbourhood in the south - constitute evolving facets of the city following the conflicts.

25 Deterritorialization is the process of dismantling or dissolving the existing social, cultural and political structures and boundaries that define a particular place or territory. This can take place in a number of different ways, for example, through migration, globalisation or technological advances. The result is blurring boundaries and creating new spaces that challenge traditional notions of identity, community and belonging. Re-territorialisation, on the other hand, refers to the process of creating new forms of social, cultural and political structures that arise in response to de-territorialisation. In the wake of the disorienting effects of de-territorialisation, these new structures serve as a way of re-establishing a sense of identity, community and belonging. Deleuze and Guattari argued that de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation are ongoing processes significant to understanding contemporary society and culture. They believed that the forces of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation were always at work. They shape and reshape our sense of identity and community in complex and unpredictable ways. In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004).

26 The Chrysalinitissa neighbourhood is the area Papadakis refers to as Tahtakallas. Tahtakallas, Tahtakale in Turkish, was a Turkish neighbourhood before division. After the population exchange, it became a neighbourhood to which the Greeks living in the north migrated, and today it is known as Chrysalinitissa.

27 Oktay, "An Analysis and Review of the Divided City of Nicosia, Cyprus, and New Perspectives."

Narrative 3: The Language of The Buffer Zone



6 - The Language of the Buffer Zone

After focusing on the borders of Nicosia, I decided to explore the Buffer Zone in greater detail. During my visual research, I came to the conclusion that the texture of the division zone, especially within the Walled City, was more of a colourful spotlight than a physical barrier dividing the city.²⁸ The images I found were often painted barrels, graffiti-covered building walls and surfaces adorned with flags and writings. So, I aimed to create an image of the Buffer Zone of the city, which led me to wonder about the meaning of the texture of the city.

28 - From my research diary on 16th March 2022.

I am drawn to ponder the texture of the border. Numerous stories circulate, but the border is not the sole focal point in Nicosia. The city itself holds its own intrigue. This led me to consider if I could capture the city's nature in an image...On the table, I discovered a fragment where the trace of the walled city had been cut out. It seemed like a frame. Perhaps it is a piece I cut from a print, leaving me with a negative rendition of the map. I believe that the shape itself is iconic. Its contours unmistakably identify it as Nicosia. Subsequently, I turned to an online search for materials and used these keywords: "Nicosia, buffer zone, greenline, border, crossing point." The results yielded vibrant images of barrels. These barrels serve to close off streets and demarcate the border. They function as a physical barrier. Yet, what caught my interest most was that they were adorned with marks made by people. They appeared to serve as a canvas for locals to convey messages. Among the messages, I deciphered phrases like "No Border! No Nation!" or "PEACE" or "LOWLIFE." So, I decided to integrate them into my composition. Gradually, it began to take on the semblance of the walled city, infused with the border's texture. However, it was shaped not only by division but by the collective will of its inhabitants. Ultimately, I provided an image of the city to represent its texture.

The Nicosia Border Wall is a unique structure consisting of a line of buildings following a street in the city. Unlike walls of division, such as those in Berlin or Mexico, this wall follows the trace of a street, with the buildings forming its surface and the gaps filled in with various materials, often collaged with colours, signs, texts and drawings. It offers a stark contrast to the Venetian walls. While the walls on the edges of the city served as a protective barrier and limit of the city during the Middle Ages and now stand as a historical artefact, the Buffer Zone, the perforated surfaces covered by found materials, is a reminder of the city's recent history of conflict and division; once a lively shopping street, but now a no-man zone with abandoned buildings and pockets of vegetation. Despite its seemingly artistic look, the border consists of fragments of the division. Through my visual research, I wanted to capture the materiality of the border and highlight the irony of its limited past with a divided present. [6]

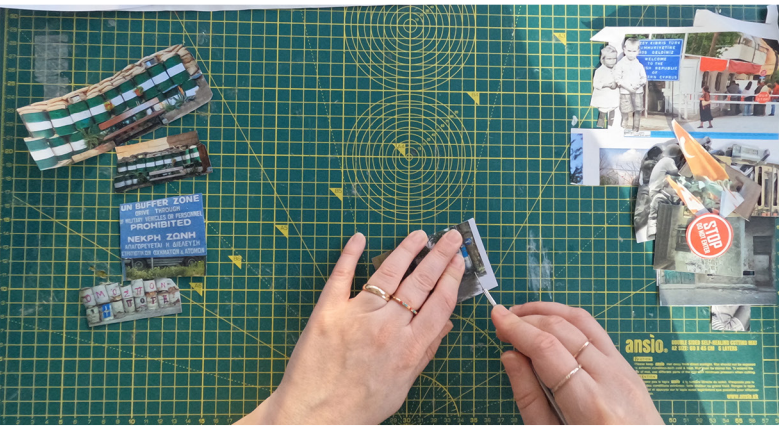
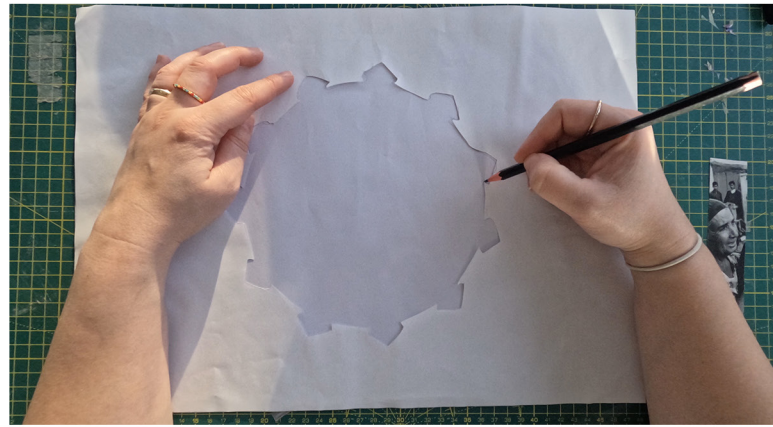
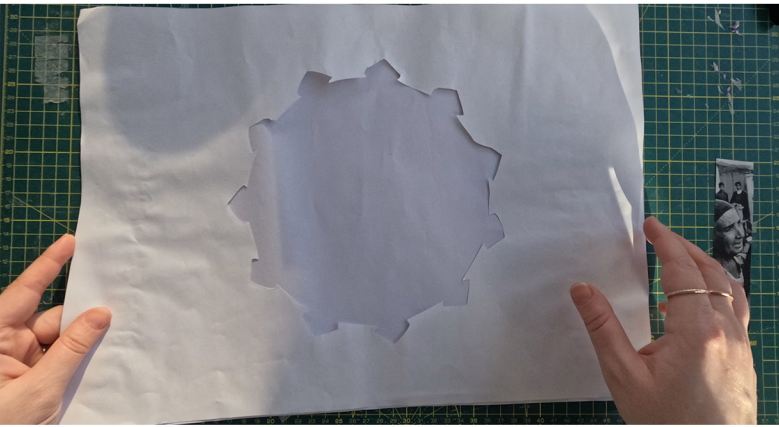
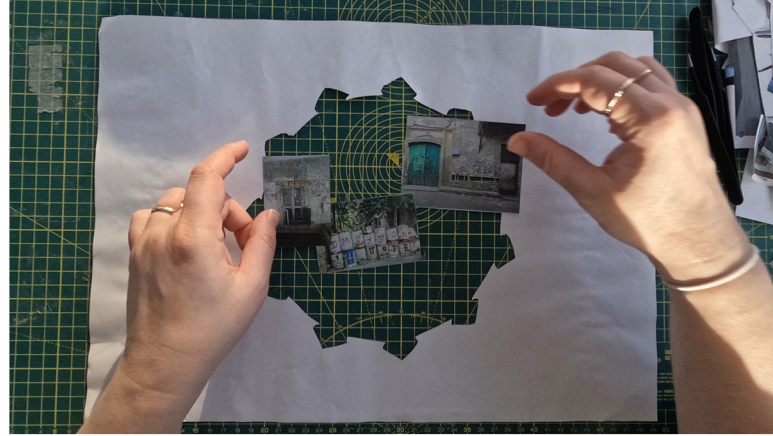
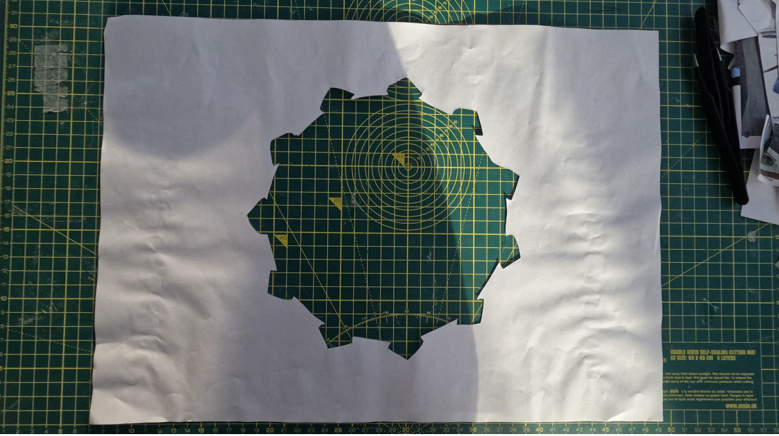
The role of imagery in Nicosia's division space

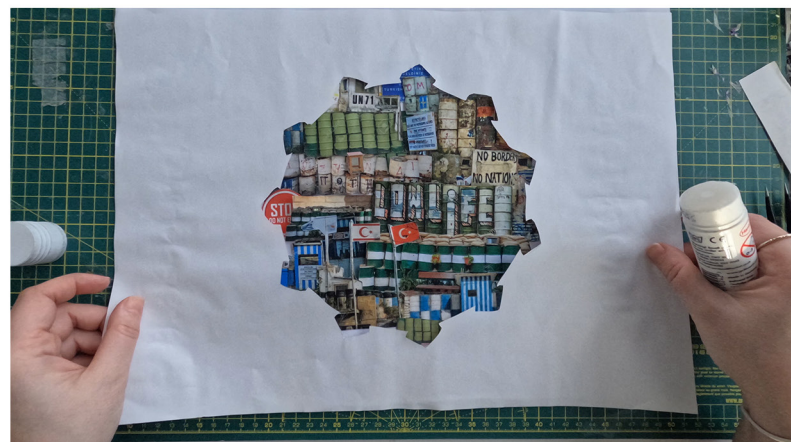
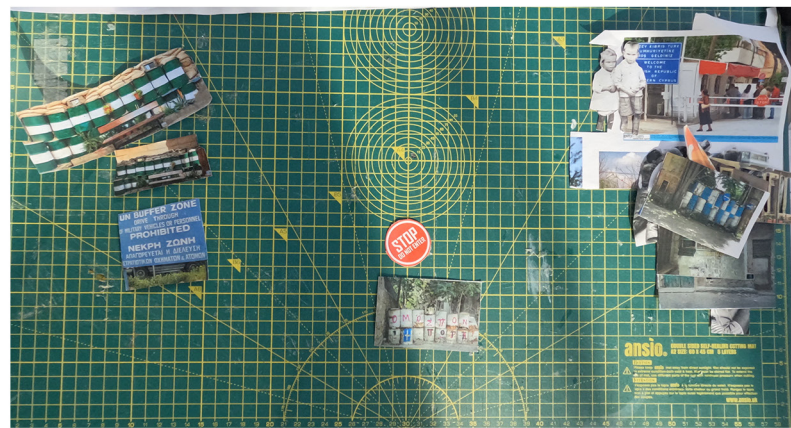
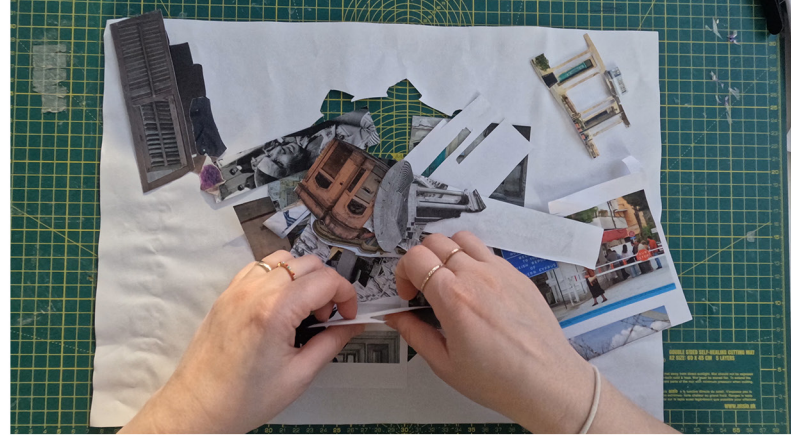
The quotidian experience of the border is much more varied and complicated than its theorisation as simply a dead or abandoned space. It serves as a memorial in Nicosia, but unlike officially sanctioned memorials like the giant statue of Archbishop Makarios in the Southern part of Nicosia or the Cypriot Turkish flag, which covers a big portion of the mountain in the northern part, illuminated after sunset, "the border is a space which can offer up no single uncontested, coherent meaning".²⁹ Studies of the Border zone generally focus on memory research, that accepts the surface of the zone as a site where personal and political memory intersect. It is a palimpsest of inter-communal conflict, serving as a reminder of the limitations faced by individuals who have left their past behind. I seek not to disrupt, fragment, repeat, multiply, or 'correct' memories in this research; rather, I aim to trace fragments of reminders and observe their symbiotic impact.

In Nicosia, especially in and around the border, the fabric of the division has been marked by various fragments such as national colours, military outposts, signs and flags indicating prohibitions, checkpoints, graffiti, sandbags, and sniper holes. As representations of division, these fragments have an impact on how the city is perceived. Henri Bergson explains this relationship through the concept of "memory-image".³⁰ According to Bergson, our memories are not like photographs or recordings that can be replayed in

29 Alev Adil, "An Architecture of Forgetting: Towards a Poetics of the 'Dead Zone' of Nicosia," in *Memory and Nostalgia*, ed. Atilla Silku, Murat Erdem, and Patrick Folk (Izmir: Ege University Eleventh International Cultural Studies Symposium, 2007).

30 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Library of Philosophy (London : New York: S. Sonnenschein & co., lim. ; Macmillan co., 1911).





our minds. Memory is akin to a dynamic, living representation, and interacts with us as it constantly changes and develops. The memory image does not passively reflect the past but rather moulds the present. That is, the image is central not only to memory but also to perceptions of the present, which are not limited to the mind's contact with the objective present. Memory images inform and form perception as they influence the interpretation of the present. Therefore, the images in the pockets of the border create our perception of the city in proportion to our own background.

Images are present in every space people move through and physically experience through the senses. But in fragmented cities, directed, deliberate, directive, and provocative imagery is prevalent. In contested spaces or divided cities, chosen meanings and memories are reflected through the images and symbols that are installed. In the book *The Society of the Spectacle*, French philosopher and filmmaker, Guy Debord notes the relationship between images and the societies they represent, arguing that society is increasingly mediated through images and representations. Debord suggests that images can be wielded as a powerful tool for directing society and creating alternative illusions.³¹ Additionally, Italian writer and thinker Umberto Eco, in his semiotic theory, states that these images can be used to understand disagreements, differences and conflicts between people and recognises that semiotic signs play an important role in communication between people and therefore influence the social structure. According to Eco, semiotic signs can also be one of the important tools used by powerful groups to communicate and control their ideologies and interests.³² Thus, in contested spaces such as Nicosia, everyday life can be guided by concrete and symbolic signs that are shaped around the controversy.

Examples of the use of imagery as a demonstration of power or as provocative rhetoric can be seen in Nicosia. Every hundred metres of the border has the flags of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey on the north side, and the flag of the Republic of Cyprus and Greece on the south side. A more extreme example is found in Northern Cyprus. On the slope of the mountain, two large-scale landscape flags of Turkey and the TRNC are displayed, positioned so that they can be seen from almost anywhere by Greek Cypriots in the south. This can be read as an act of the unrecognised government of Northern Cyprus declaring its permanent presence and an attempt to establish a mutual dominance on the border. But such images can be created not only by state authorities but also by different groups living in the city as a reaction, as also exemplified by various murals

31 Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983).

32 Umberto Eco, "Towards a Semiotic Inquiry into the Television Message", in *Internationalizing Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, ed. Ackbar Abbas and Nguyet John Erni (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); Umberto Eco, "Social Life as a Sign System", in *Fashion Theory: A Reader*, ed. Malcolm Barnard (London: Routledge, 2007), 207–11.

in Belfast.³³

Whether neutral or more overtly persuasive, images shape the perception of a city. Although political discourses and the colours of particular parties and nations are commonplace in the city, the constant reference to a sign creates an intense process of reminding. Therefore, even if some images are ambiguous, in controversial cities, they play an important role in the perception of the city and the creation of its image. The images in Nicosia delimit territory and provide a convincing argument for each region's claim to ownership of the island. They play an active role in the creation of national meanings and influence the everyday visual background of the city.

The images examined through the collage-making process have emerged as a dynamic force that moulds perception and memory, serving as the foundational visual elements of the city. This realisation prompted a deeper consideration of the impact of these images - both organically and consciously formed in the skin of the border - on the city's collective perception. As deduced from the collage, the visual representation of the border, defined by the trace of the Venetian wall, can be construed as a manifestation of division as perceived by the local populace. It presents a new perspective on the city and its identity. While the Venetian Wall steadfastly upholds the city's unity, the border walls, with their distinct collage-like structure, encapsulate the city's fragmentation and resilience. They serve as a testament to how a city transforms, not only in its physically but also symbolically.

By concentrating on the surface and periphery of the buffer zone, this collage brings to light Nicosia's multifaceted identity, interwoven with images that convey meaning and division. It prompts contemplation on the nuanced distinctions in meaning between the border's past and its present state, shaped by the partition. Once a vibrant shopping district, the Buffer Zone now stands as a poignant reminder of the city's turbulent history. The surface of the buffer zone, characterised by the unique collage-like structure of its border walls, bears witness to the city's division and resilience. Marked by both military signage and local residents' markings, it has evolved into an organic monument of division. These images, coupled with the research, offer a compelling narrative on Nicosia - a city depicted through a visual tapestry of division. They provide profound insights into the enduring repercussions of conflict on the city's cultural and social fabric.

33 Bakshi, *Topogr. Memories*, 64–65.

Narrative 4: In Between the No-Man Zone



8 - In-Between the No-man Zone

After creating a narrative about what the texture of the Buffer Zone could mean for the city and its inhabitants, my curiosity turned towards the inside of the Buffer Zone.³⁴ In the images, I found two concrete building surfaces heavily marked, which appeared to lead into the Buffer Zone delineated by a long-unmanned zone line. This physical gap serves as a tangible manifestation of a divided space, evoking enduring conflict and preserving the remnants of historical events. Despite its official designation as a no man's land, this demarcation cuts through the heart of Nicosia, effectively freezing time at the moment it was created. This raises questions regarding the nature and significance of this inactive urban area. I therefore questioned what it means for the city, where Turkish and Greek troops are positioned on the edge of the northern and southern

34 - From my research diary on 18th March 2022.

This time, I opted to work with a different scale. I delved into images related to the border, specifically from within the no-man's land. Thanks to the United Nations, I came across a few images portraying the situation from the inside. The buildings within the zone appear almost frozen in time. It's quite uncanny that life continues on the other side of these walls...To shield the table from any potential damage, I placed layers beneath the image I intended to cut. Interestingly, I stumbled upon a peculiar moment. At times,

I checked the progress on the screen to ensure the video was recording. Surprisingly, what I witnessed in reality with my own eyes differed from what appeared on the screen... As I worked with the pieces, I had set in place to protect the table, I hadn't initially realised they would become part of my collage. However, observing the process on the screen, a moment crystallised – an image emerged, and my scissors collage all became integrated into the composition. Thus, I understand again that collage is a process, not the final composition... During my research on precedents, I came across Superstudio's intriguing collages. I was captivated by employing a grid for the unknown or the known unknowns. It also aided me in crafting a space that doesn't quite belong anywhere but exists within the heart of the city, like a space within space. Consequently, I resolved to incorporate grids into my collage. Instead of drawing them, I created a textured effect by cutting grid fragments. It was a time-consuming task, but serendipitously, I stumbled upon something... As I cut pieces from the leaflet, I had numerous square fragments containing text. Some were related to political matters. I decided to utilise them as a texture and adhered them in place. Though I'm not entirely satisfied with the result, it did grant a certain textual quality... I placed the grid fragments on the background and applied black colour. When I removed them, a dark grid-like image emerged, reminiscent of Koolhaas' prison. For the lower section, I incorporated more perspectival lines, evoking a sense of ground. As I positioned the buildings, they didn't appear as images from within the border; rather, they seemed like structures from an undefined place. Thus, I introduced additional fragments to signify their association with Nicosia. It still retains an aura of obscurity, but thanks to NATO, we find ourselves in a realm of safety!

zones, respectively, while United Nations peacekeepers maintain a presence inside.

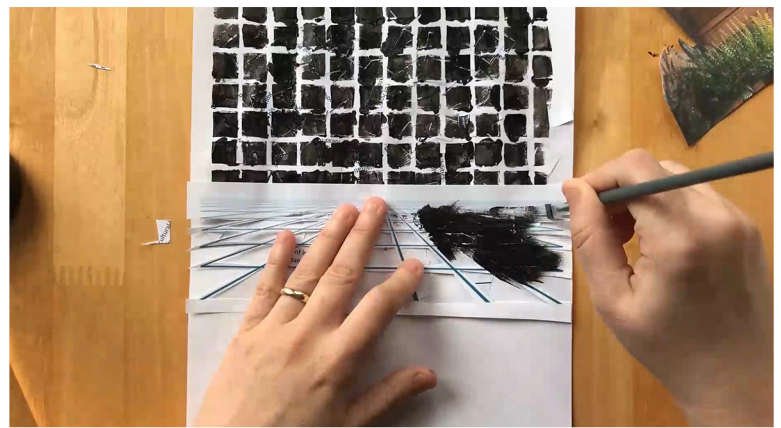
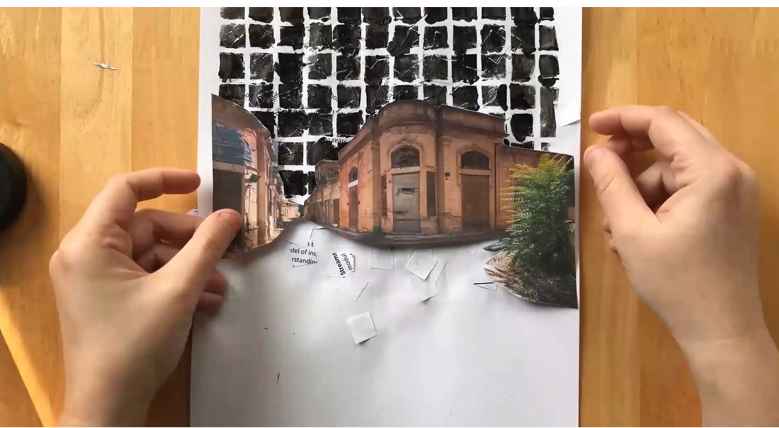
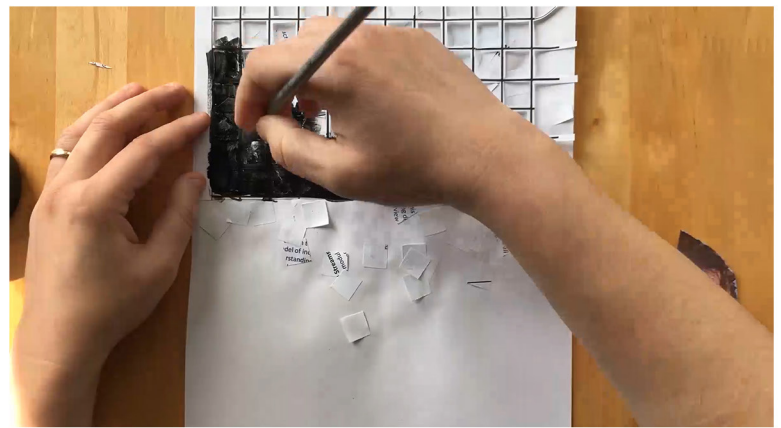
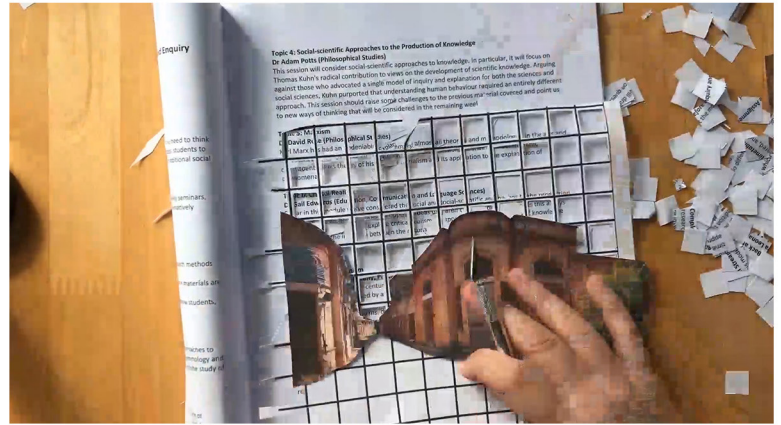
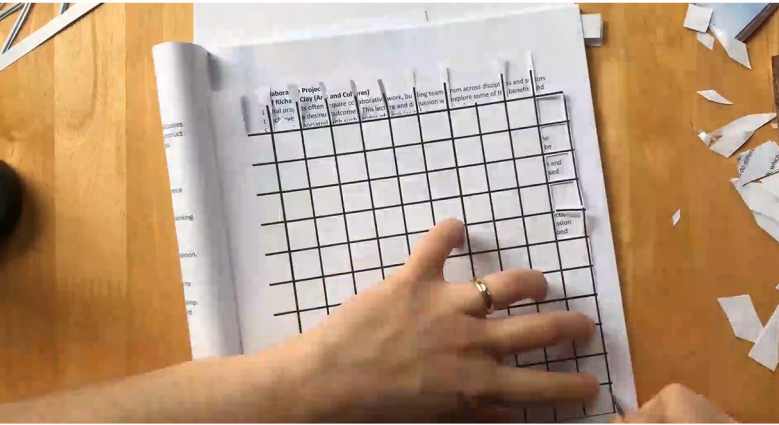
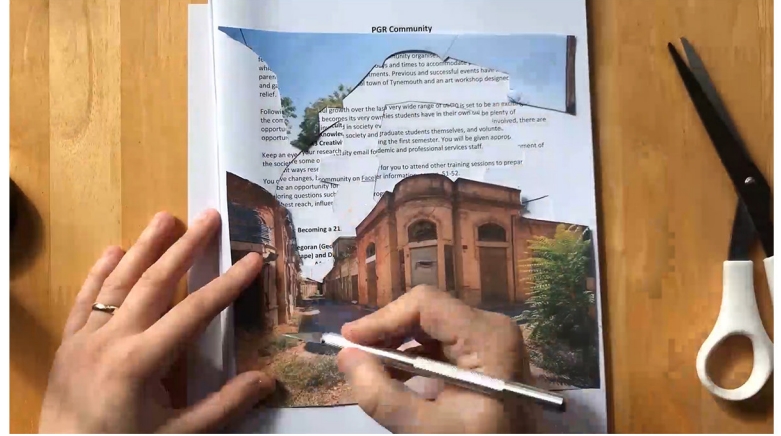
The surfaces within this domain can potentially serve as a site for communication and exchange between opposing factions. However, it is also possible that this fortified zone, initially created for security purposes, unintentionally fosters corrosive nationalism, conflict, and oppression. Additionally, it could function as a meeting point that facilitates contemporary cooperation, contrasting with its previous role as a dividing line. Engaging in a dialogue with the past and envisioning the future within the confines of this space, bound by security perimeters on both sides, may be challenging but not impossible.

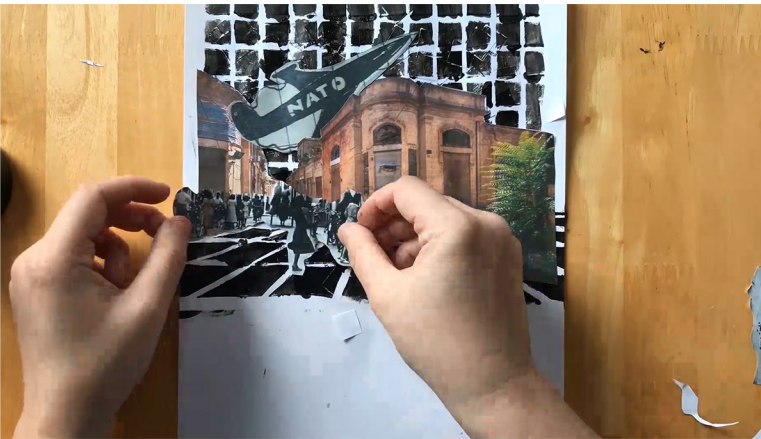
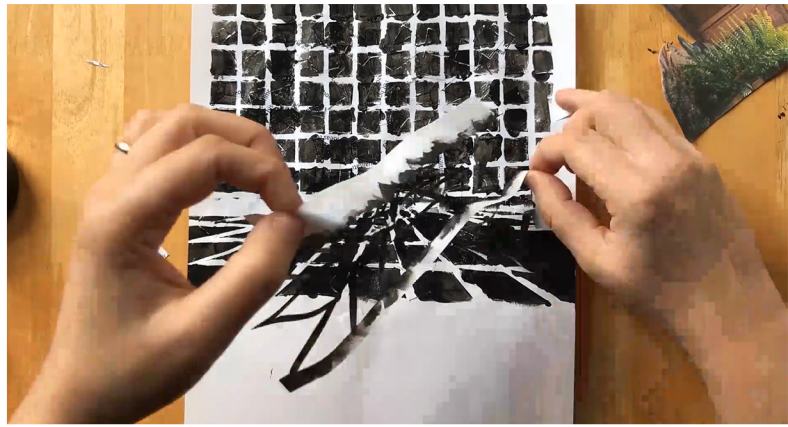
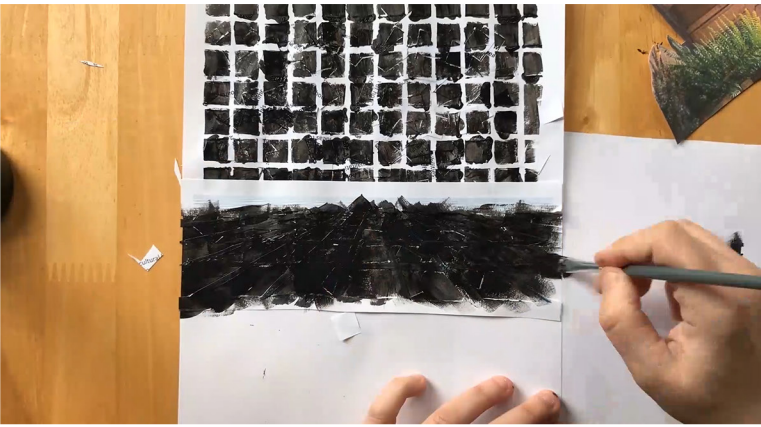
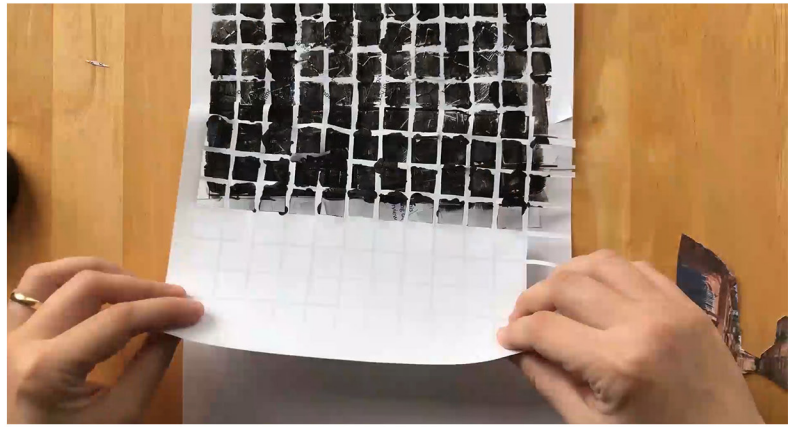
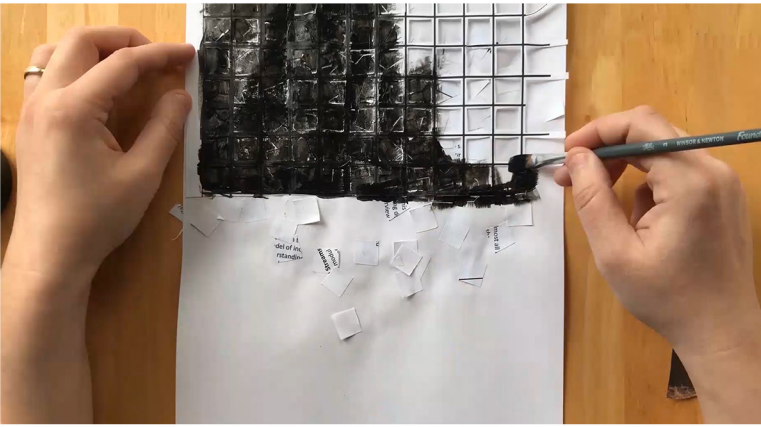
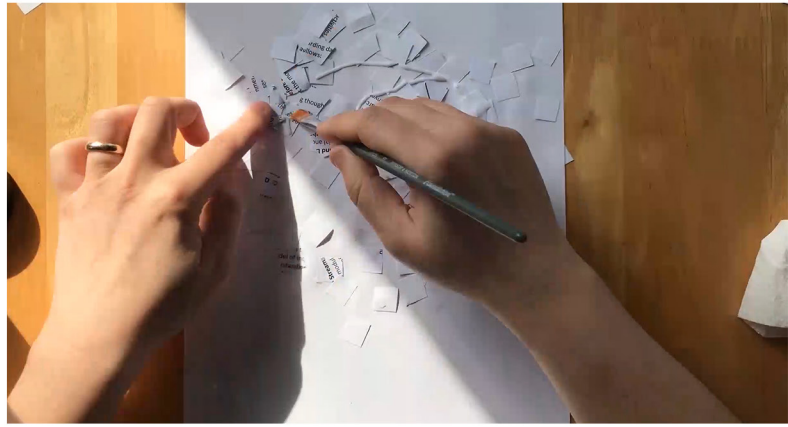
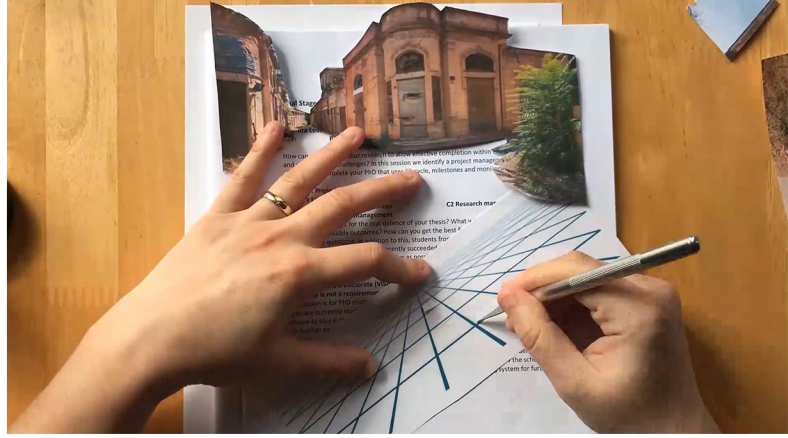
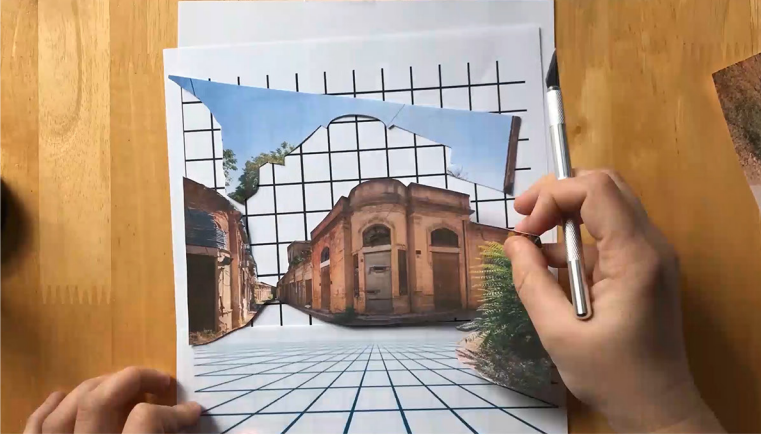
I try to understand the embodiment of this dehumanised enclave within the cityscape, juxtaposing fragments of images from the past, present, and future. Through the juxtaposition of images from the past, border zone reports provided by the United Nations, and the implementation of grid lines that allow for the consideration of alternative dimensions, I have strived to reconstruct a composition of the past, present, and future in order to grasp the meaning of this occupied space for the city. While this composition challenges a definitive classification as the Buffer Zone, it also led me to research the potential for alternative interpretations of the border zone. [8]

The power of 'line'

The story of the creation of the divide in Cyprus is a rather ironic one. On the eve of 28 December 1963, British Major General Peter Young, the commander of British units in Cyprus, convened a meeting between the two embattled groups in Nicosia to agree on the precise demarcation of a temporary ceasefire boundary and decided to establish a mutually acceptable military demarcation dividing Nicosia in two. Following extensive discussion and revision, Major General Young utilised 'a green chinagraph' pencil to delineate two forward positions on a map of Nicosia, creating the double-layered division line between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Originally intended as a means to halt hostilities and safeguard lives during the precarious period between a ceasefire and a more enduring settlement negotiated between the antagonistic ethnic communities, the same demarcation line, now known as the Green Line, continues to divide the city to this day.³⁵ Consequently, the temporary line drawn by the green chinagraph pencil on paper continues to function as an active division line in Nicosia.

³⁵ Calame and Charlesworth, *Divided Cities : Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*, 132–33.





Border studies show that debates about borders consistently utilise a common pattern of self-contradiction and thus present them as paradoxical phenomena.³⁶ Despite addressing various aspects of borders, this recurring pattern serves as a unifying theme in different discussions. For example, borders are described as both containment and spaces of mobility,³⁷ simultaneously as bridges and barriers,³⁸ as spaces that connect and divide,³⁹ as places of becoming and places of belonging,⁴⁰ and as barriers and opportunities.⁴¹ Thus, whether the Buffer Zone retains its original meaning of an emergency measure against inter-communal clashes in the divided city is questionable. This boundary has become increasingly intricate yet concurrently more permeable and dynamic. While it still reflects historical considerations in terms of allowing the separation of the two communities due to security concerns, its contemporary contradictions point to alternative readings of its current meaning.

As seen in the analysis of Narrative 3, the Buffer Zone in Cyprus is embellished with the prominent national symbols of Turkey and Greece, namely their respective flags. Both parties are dedicated to exhibiting fervent nationalism towards one another, particularly within and extending beyond this border. In the northern part of Nicosia, the border zone is adorned with flags representing Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Conversely, in the southern region, directly facing these flags, Greek and Greek Cypriot flags are prominently displayed. Therefore, this zone can also be interpreted as a significant locus for the manifestation of intense nationalism and its inherent conflicts.

The collaged image provides a narrative that traces the evolving definition of the Buffer Zone. A structure existing within this zone is situated amidst a grid and an indeterminate space, and the juxtaposed black and white fragments endeavour to impart some semblance of meaning to this ambiguous expanse. This inquiry into the challenging-to-define space sparked the research into its genesis. The buffer zone, originally delineated by a line, eventually transformed into a sprawling territory encompassing a substantial portion of the city. Hence, it is this transition from a mere line to an

36 Yiannis Papadakis, "Borders, Paradox and Power", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 2 (2018): 285–302.

37 Hilary Cunningham and Josiah Heyman, "Introduction: Mobilities and Enclosures at Borders", *Identities (Yverdon, Switzerland)* 11, no. 3 (2004): 289–302.

38 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Cambridge: University of California Press, 2011).

39 Sarah F Green, *Notes from the Balkans : Locating Marginality and Ambiguity on the Greek-Albanian Border*, Princeton Modern Greek Studies (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 129

40 Chiara Brambilla, "Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept", *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1 (2015): 14–34.

41 Hastings Donnan and Thomas M Wilson, *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, *Border Identities* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

expansive area that forms the crux of the research.

The visual narrative portrays the Buffer Zone's initial establishment, driven by security concerns between opposing factions, with the intent of mitigating the conflict. However, over time, it inadvertently perpetuated the conflict by embodying distinct representations of both sides, embodied in signs and flags. Simultaneously, it has evolved into a space where fragmentation and controversy can coexist and be collectively examined. Yet, the realisation of this potential for multiple perspectives and creative expression within borders is contingent upon power dynamics. Borders, being heavily policed and regulated spaces, often impose constraints on such possibilities. While some instances may witness the actualisation of creative and multi-perspectival potentials, in other cases, these possibilities are stifled. Despite its function as a point of contact or a space for cooperation, the Buffer Zone remains susceptible to the influence and control of specific authorities. Consequently, while these facets of borders foster cooperation and creativity, they cannot be taken for granted or assumed a priori. The paradoxical coexistence of policing and political suppression invariably looms over these spaces. Nevertheless, even though the collage introduces fresh dimensions to the definition of the Buffer Zone, it continues to bear the imprint and scrutiny of the initial moment of division.

Narrative 5: The Door to the Other Side



10 - Olympus Hotel

In my extensive exploration of the border division, a particular image I came across during my research captured my attention, prompting a series of inquiries. This image featured a wall of a building within the buffer zone, with a conspicuous door accompanied by a sign bearing the inscription 'Olympus Hotel'. This image sparked a chain of reflections, raising questions about the nature of the door. Could it have served as a hotel entrance or perhaps a service access? The question of whether it belonged to the North or the South of Nicosia became somewhat inconsequential in light of its functional obsolescence following the division. Yet, as my mind delved into contemplations about its pre-division state, a surge of inquiries arose - what lay beyond this door? The questioning of what lay beyond - whether it led to the North or the South - haunted my thoughts. Did it even matter? If it opened to the South, I realised it was a threshold I could never physically cross without proper authorisation. However, this did not stop me from making collage. I thought about the potential of this medium to imagine crossing a boundary within a restricted space.⁴²

I began by cutting the door fragment. Upon its cut, I was left with an expanse of pure white - a seemingly incongruous representation of an area abandoned for half a century. However, my intention was not to depict the literal space behind the door but rather to convey its latent possibilities. Opting for a perspective drawing instead of the stark white, I infused the image with depth. To underscore its position in the liminal zone of Nicosia, I introduced a soldier fragment traversing the road within this dimensional space. With just three fragments, this collage engendered a profound interrogation. It prodded me to contemplate the latent potentials of this terrain, leaving me with a fundamental question: is the buffer zone merely a political and provocative demarcation, or does it hold deeper complexities beyond its role in defining division? [10]

The border as a paradoxical structure

As discussed in Narrative 4, the Buffer Zone can be conceived of as a political and provocative zone that defines division but also as a zone that can unify and allow for multiple endeavours. Borders are, therefore, on the one hand, contested historical constructs that represent conflict. On the other hand, borders are places where historically constructed or imagined boundaries are constantly negotiated and interpreted through the dialectics of everyday life.⁴³ That is to say; it can be seen not only as a notional, fixed,

43 John Agnew and Anssi Paasi, "Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness: The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border", *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 78, no. 3 (1996).

42 - From my research diary on 19th March 2022.

Due to COVID-19, I sourced many of the images online. While researching the "green line," I came across an image that truly made me contemplate. It featured a door with the sign "Olympus Hotel." This image was from the no-man's zone. Presumably, it was a prominent hotel in the historic district of the city, and this door was likely a service entrance...I didn't immediately dive into collage-making. I devoted some time to mulling over this image, and while I pondered, I scoured for additional materials. Even though I wasn't intentionally aiming to create a provocative or political collage, somehow, this image and my material exploration compelled me to reflect on the city's situation...Every image I uncovered included at least one or two soldiers or elements associated with the military. This led me to recognise that conflict, division, and borders are inherent aspects of this city, politically, socially, and culturally...In the collage, I allowed the discovered images to serve as guides or references for the process. Simultaneously, I knew that conflict, division, and borders constitute the city's core. The door in the image, in reality, represents nothing - there's emptiness behind it, and no one will open it again. This realisation urged me to contemplate what lay beyond the door, what existed "behind space." Thus, I commenced by cutting out the door. By chance, I was working on a surface with writing on it. That's when I discerned the possibilities it offered...Collage is a process of reclaiming and revitalising spaces. It empowers me to breathe new life and meaning into them. In this project, the archival examination of the image became the foundation for further imaginative exploration...After I cut out the door piece, I noticed the title of the text: "Politics and Society." While it's a relevant title to the site I'm working on, I chose to leave this gap on the pristine white page. It disconcerted me because I knew that the "no-man's zone" wasn't so pure, and it could not be represented with the colour white. Consequently, I opted to sketch some space within the fragment. The works of Archigram and Superstudio inspired. So, I attempted to craft some perspective drawings, but eventually, I relinquished that pursuit and found perspective space drawings on the internet. After a few attempts, I found the precise scale for the void. This step allowed

me to visualise the potential space beyond the abandoned door. However, on the table, there were numerous images featuring soldiers. They prompted me to confront reality. While perspectives enable me to ponder possibilities, in Nicosia, there is an undeniable reality. In a somewhat reckless move, I cut a fragment with a barely discernible soldier...Not every fragment was cut to align perfectly with the others. The composition is inherently fragmented. In this collage, my goal wasn't to create a perfectly harmonious composition; instead, I allowed myself to gain experience in collage-making. Until the final moment, I refrained from permanently affixing the fragments to the paper. I adhered to them only when I felt it was enough...I still can remove or add something, but I'm content with the current state. I can read the door. I can discern the intricacies of this contested space. There are no signs indicating that this door is from the no-man's zone of Nicosia. Yet, it seems to be the door to different dimensions. However, there's a figure walking with a gun. Caution is still warranted.

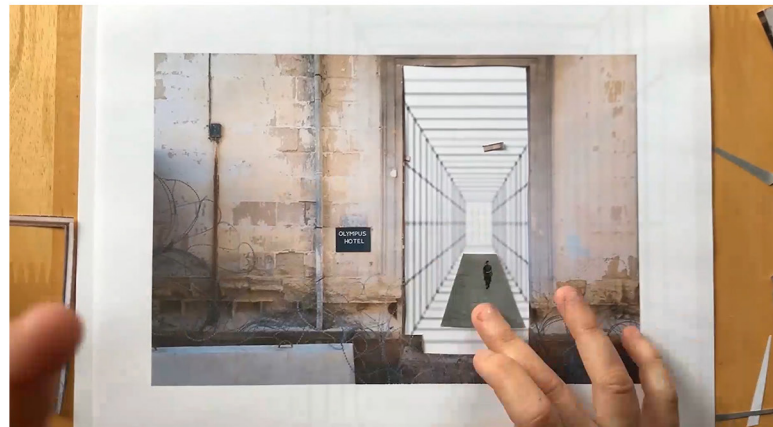
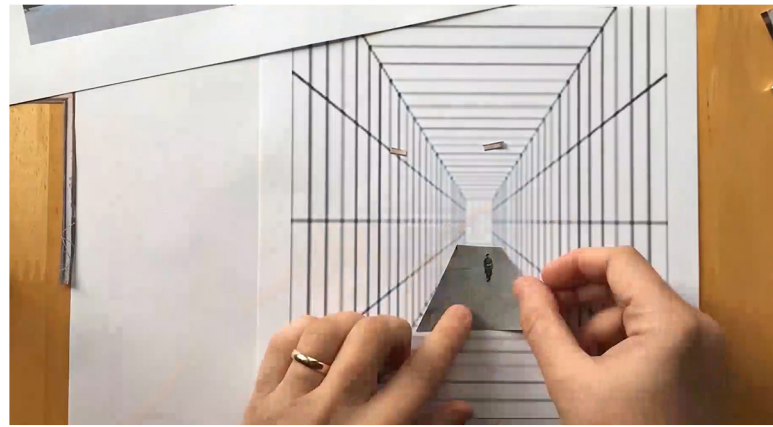
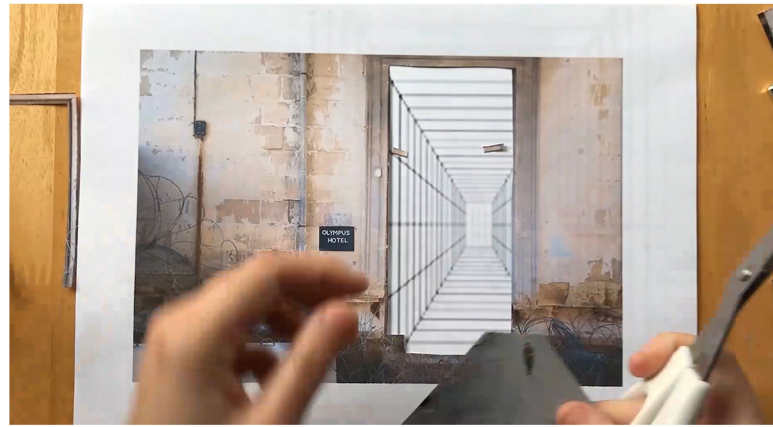
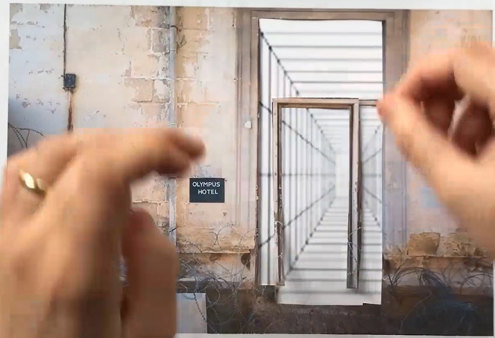
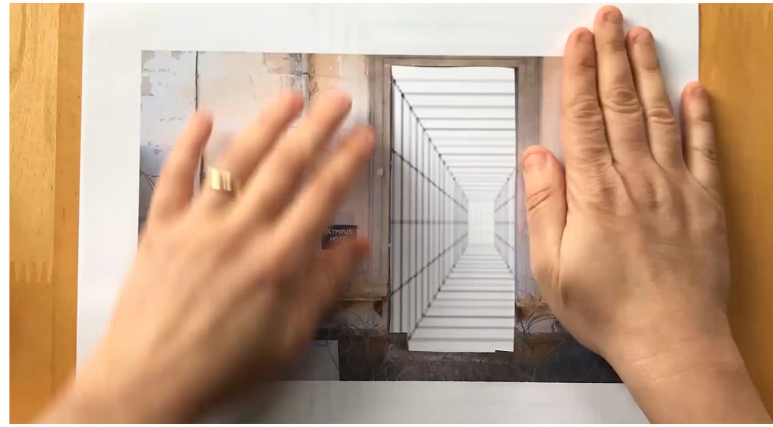
stable entity but also as a potential space of processual application and influence. Adopting this perspective, the Buffer zone can be utilised not only for division but also for integration, functioning as hubs of interconnected social, economic, political, and cultural forces that drive transformative change in dialectical relationships.

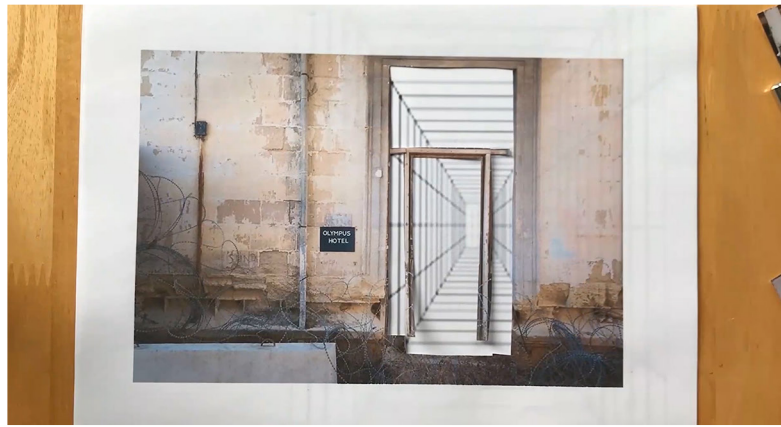
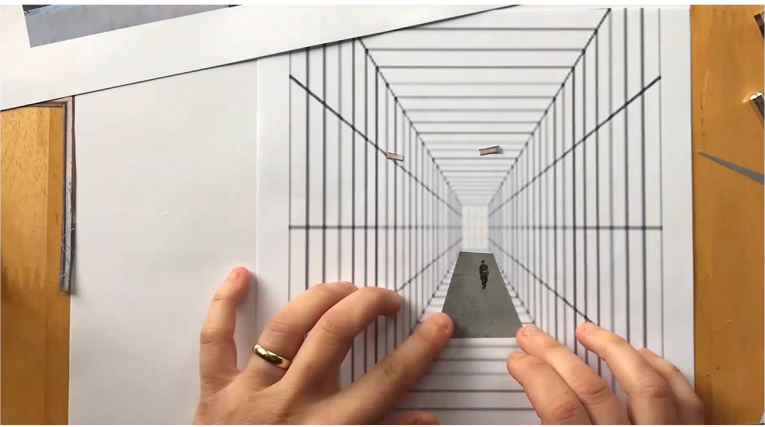
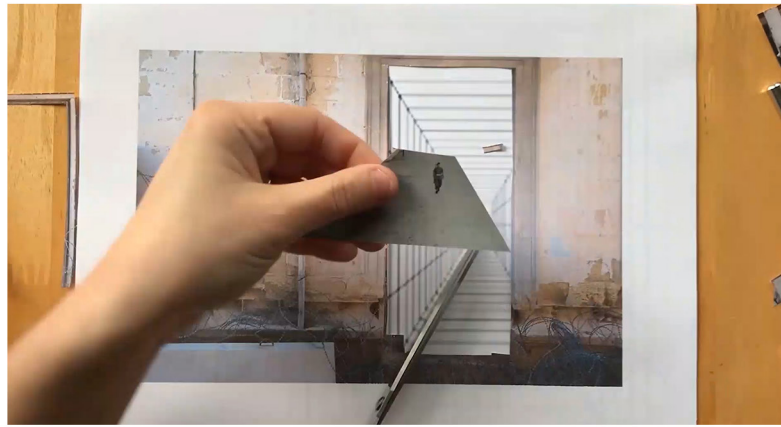
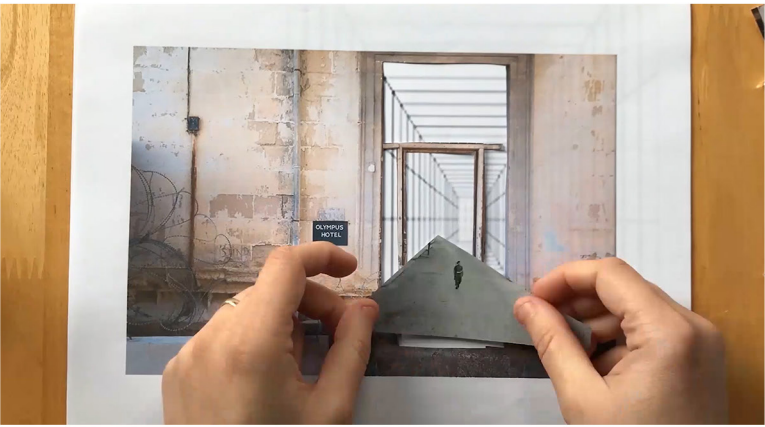
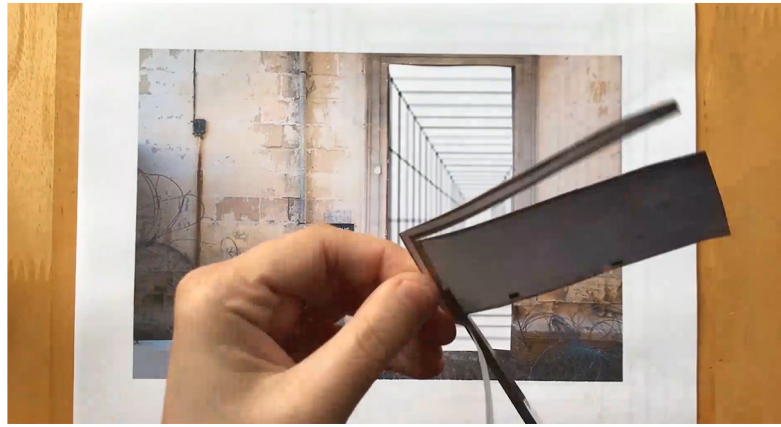
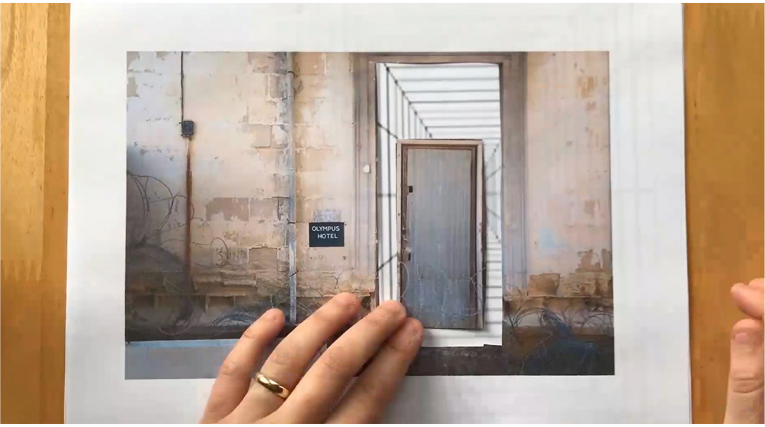
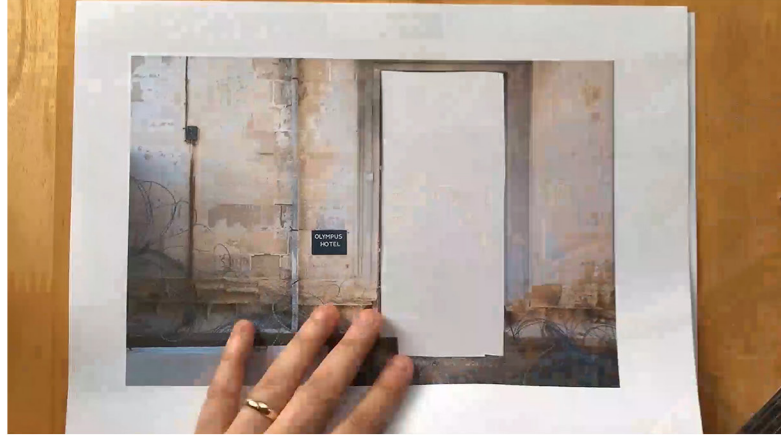
According to Chiara Brambilla, who discusses “the multifaceted link between the link between borders and creativity”, “borders can no longer be seen as a grid ordering the world mosaic; they should rather be considered as paradoxical structures that, created in order to separate and distinguish, become - continuously crossed - an expression of culture and territory multipolarity, generating a transnational flow of narrations and images”.⁴⁴ Borders are, therefore, not only a tool to define what is divided or contested, but they are also a zone that conveys the dialectic of potential alternative thinking. From this perspective, borders can be regarded as spaces shaped by conflict but imbued with the potential for creativity.

When I position myself within the border, the conventional and mundane representation of Nicosia's division into two sites as boundary lines on maps or in the physical landscape reveals a hidden complexity. Contrary to the cartographic depiction, the border signifies a space within the lived world, simultaneously encompassing a dimension. In contrast to the prevailing dichotomous perspective that perceives borders solely as separators, I propose an alternative viewpoint that acknowledges the dimensionality of borders through collage. By adopting a systemic and processual view of borders, I propose a shift away from the currently dominant one-dimensional worldview, which calls into question the complexity and creativity of borders, towards other fields of thought, other dimensions and other topologies that can grasp the changing identities of the current world system.

Despite positive strides made towards peace and dialogue since the opening of the borders in 2003, it is important to acknowledge that political boundaries and decisions cannot instantaneously undergo a complete transformation. However, this does not preclude the consideration of alternative realities for Nicosia. In the midst of the intricate complexities engendered by secession in Nicosia, collage emerges as an environment capable of transcending these boundaries. When contemplating an image of a door on a wall from within the border, attention shifts from the void behind the door to the alternative reality that can be envisioned through

44 Chiara Brambilla, “Borders: Paradoxical Structures Between Essentialization and Creativity”, *World Futures* 65, no. 8 (2009): 582–88.





the fragments. It is worth, however, recognising that even in the realm of alternative realities, political influences persist due to the inherent nature of contested spaces. As can be seen in the collage, the door standing right next to the hotel sign presents us with a vast plane behind it. Interestingly, the destination accessed through this doorway, whether leading to North Nicosia or South Nicosia, remains uncertain. However, intriguingly, even within this realm of imagined possibilities, a soldier assumes the role of overseeing and regulating this divergent reality. So, I am asking: "What is next? What can I do in Nicosia? How can collage help to bring a new approach to these gaps? Can I use collage to create my own alternative realities of Nicosia?"

Nicosia, through its Fragments

As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter was conceived before my visit to Nicosia, framing it as an exploration of the city through my imagination and interpretation. Before physically experiencing Nicosia, tracing its fragments through images allowed me to analyse and understand the city from a collagist-urbanist perspective. These interpretations, initially rooted in my own imagination, evolved through research into a method of exploring and elucidating the city's complexities. Emerging from ongoing urban debates, the fragments offered diverse interpretations of Nicosia and directed the research. This approach enabled me to construct my own narratives of the city, offering a fresh lens to view its history and current state. Moving beyond a traditional historical analysis, this section sought to introduce Nicosia and its texture by following its fragments, ultimately presenting five distinct perceptions of the city through a series of collages.

The process began with an exploration of the city's maps, uncovering imprints from different periods. This led to an understanding of Nicosia's history, particularly its rise to capital status. Building upon the influence of the first collage, the second one delved deeper into the city's maps, uncovering both visible and invisible boundaries within the divided city. This exploration brought to light the multifaceted tragedies arising from urban division, encompassing issues of migration, economic issues, politics, and social conflicts. The third story focused on the physical division of Nicosia, highlighting the presence of a tangible border that cuts through the city's heart. Diverging from other divided cities, Nicosia's dividing line manifested as a palpable trace, permeating everyday life and serving as a symbolic marker that bifurcates the capital. This collage work raised questions regarding the recognition of this mark within the city, highlighting its transformation into a potent symbol. The fourth collage ventured beyond the border to explore its inner dynamics, revealing it as not just a line of division but also a space brimming with potential for reconciliation. The final collage, while aiming to understand the space beyond the border, also emphasised the potential of collage-making as a tool for fostering alternative perspectives on the city for further research.

This work also drew attention to the fragmented nature of Nicosia. Unlike the collage-making process in the previous chapter, which focused on the divided history of Cyprus, the focus here shifted to finding and understanding fragments of Nicosia, guiding the subsequent literature review. Therefore, the first focus in this chapter was the realisation of the fragments of the city rather than the image of the city. These fragments significantly influenced my understanding of Nicosia, leading to narratives that encapsulate the city. As I stated in the diary during the process of making the collage 'The Walls

of Nicosia':

Handling the fragments, I envision the city map as a layered entity. Thus, it seems fitting to create something that allows me to explore these layers...During the process, I noticed the city is marked by various defined lines: the Venetian ones, the north-south axes, and the border. There are also numerous historical points – churches, passages, hans, baths, gates, walls, crossings, mosques. Some appear to have changed, while others remain unchanged. It's intriguing to see the disparities within such a compact city...I select fragments from different maps – Venetian walls from one, the main north-south line and the border from others... They don't just represent lines or structures; they embody information about the city. This leads me to question what these lines signify and what they represent for the city.⁴⁵

Rowe and Koetter, in their work *Collage City*, propose using collage as a metaphor to perceive the city as fragmented yet harmonious. They envision a city where diverse materials and forms coalesce to create a new entity, resulting in a discontinuous, heterogeneous, yet harmoniously integrated composition.⁴⁶ This collagist-urbanist approach resonated with the collage-making process I undertook in this chapter, particularly in recognizing and exploring the fragmentation of Nicosia. The city's various fragments, reflecting its diversity and heterogeneity, offered insights into its character, identity, and the transformation of its urban landscape. During the creation of the collage titled "The Boundaries", this perspective of the city as a collage became increasingly clear. As I indicated in the collage-making diary:

...I fixate on the borderline once more. It's intriguing to acknowledge the existence of a void in the heart of the city, a space deemed off-limits. It appears as a mere illustration on the map, yet in reality, it signifies a tangible, restricted area...I strive to envisage this space. I carefully affix various materials, aiming to render them more conspicuous. On paper, it remains a two-dimensional sketch, but in reality...Despite my initial perplexity in approaching this collage, it evolved into something beyond my imagination. As I infuse it with colour, it begins to convey a message, something about the city. It starts to unveil the city's limits through the gaps it represents...⁴⁷

In this chapter, the traced fragments functioned as sub-collages themselves, offering insights into the lives, identities, and cultures of Nicosia's inhabitants. During the creation of the collage 'The Language of The Buffer Zone', I

45 *From my research diary on 16 March 2022.*

46 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978).

47 *From my research diary on 16 March 2022.*

observed that many barrels used to fill gaps in Nicosia's buffer zone were marked or painted by the public. This collage, which focuses on this area, interprets these marks as messages from the city's residents, thereby presenting an image of the city shaped by its people, as I stated in the diary:

These barrels serve to close off streets and demarcate the border. They function as a physical barrier. Yet, what caught my interest most was that they were adorned with marks made by people. They appeared to serve as a canvas for locals to convey messages. Among the messages, I deciphered phrases like "No Border! No Nation!" or "PEACE" or "LOWLIFE." So, I decided to integrate them into my composition. Gradually, it began to take on the semblance of the walled city, infused with the border's texture. However, it was shaped not only by division but by the collective will of its inhabitants.⁴⁸

The collage-making process also illuminated the potential dimensions of the city. Just as a collage is created by combining fragments, removing elements from an image can also lead to a new composition. This technique, commonly seen in the works of Superstudio or Rem Koolhaas, invites new interpretations and encourages the viewer's direct engagement in the image's interpretation. At a certain point, the viewer's perception becomes important in ascribing meaning to the image. This concept was particularly evident in the creation of the collage 'The Olympus Hotel'. As detailed in the diary:

The door in the image, in reality, represents nothing – there's emptiness behind it, and no one will open it again. This realisation urged me to contemplate what lay beyond the door, what existed "behind space." Thus, I commenced by cutting out the door... This step allowed me to visualise the potential space beyond the abandoned door. However, on the table, there were numerous images featuring soldiers. They prompted me to confront reality. While perspectives enable me to ponder possibilities, in Nicosia, there is an undeniable reality. In a somewhat reckless move, I cut a fragment with a barely discernible soldier...I can read the door. I can discern the intricacies of this contested space. There are no signs indicating that this door is from the no-man's zone of Nicosia. Yet, it seems to be the door to different dimensions. However, there's a figure walking with a gun. Caution is still warranted.⁴⁹

In this chapter, the series of collages I produced presented fragmented narratives about Nicosia, using the city's own fragments as a medium. I

48 From my research diary on 19 March 2022.

49 From my research diary on 19 March 2022.

approached Nicosia as a collage, seeking to convey various subtexts within each piece through my imagination of the city. The collage-making process was significantly influenced by my role as a collagist researcher. The fragments I selected and assembled formed compositions that not only depicted the city but also guided my research about it. Thus, this chapter also introduced the potential of collage as a method in urban research, particularly its role in interpreting a city as complex and layered as Nicosia.

Through this approach, narratives about the city that might not typically emerge in conventional urban design research were brought to the forefront. It represents a comprehensive method for exploring contested urban spaces, considering the city's layers, cultural and historical structure, texture, character, and social values not in isolation but as interconnected elements. As a result, collage can be used as a tool that offers an alternative perspective in urban research, aligning with the theoretical framework established by Rowe and Koetter. By integrating various urban fragments, this method enables a deeper, more nuanced exploration of a city's multifaceted nature.

However, it is important to recognise that each trace in a collage can lead to multiple interpretations, giving rise to various narratives. As such, this form of storytelling has no definitive methods or boundaries. The primary aim here is not to capture Nicosia exhaustively through collage but to explore my understanding of the city through engagement and discernment. As a result of this experimental process, collage can emerge as a valuable methodology for constructing diverse narratives about a city and understanding its many layers. While collage does not offer a singular, unified narrative, its significance lies in its ability to evoke curiosity and provoke questions, thereby stimulating further research and exploration.

Yet, there are concerns regarding the comprehensive interpretation of the city's context when using collage. While it visually represents an image, it may not provide explicit details such as names, reasons, and dates specific to the city. Therefore, by engaging with the complexity of Nicosia's context and its varied cultural heritage through fragmented readings, the collage approach encourages a deeper understanding of the city's multifaceted layers. It underscores the importance of considering a range of perspectives and elements that have contributed to shaping the city's identity, some of which may be contentious or challenging to reconcile. Ultimately, the sequence of collages for this chapter serves as a foundation for further inquiry and exploration into Nicosia's rich and intricate history, offering a starting point for a more comprehensive understanding of the city.

This chapter marked the beginning of a detailed inquiry into Nicosia. Embracing the city's fragmentation, I sought to create narratives and deepen my understanding of the city through its disparate elements. A pivotal

realisation occurred during the creation of the final collage in this chapter, titled 'The Olympus Hotel'. I learned that collage-making involves not just the juxtaposition of fragments but also their separation. Removing a door fragment from an image and replacing it with a perspective drawing represented a significant shift in my approach. This new perspective unveiled alternative dimensions in my research on Nicosia, prompting profound questions that influenced both my practical and theoretical work: *"What is next? What can I do in Nicosia? How can collage help to bring a new approach to these gaps? Can I use collage to create my own alternative realities of Nicosia?"*

These questions extended beyond the aim of this chapter, influencing my collage-making process. While the preceding chapters introduced and sought to comprehend the city, the next chapters will present my exploration of how I can interpret the gaps in the city through collage. This line of inquiry about creating my own collage interpretation of Nicosia led me to explore the city's peacekeeping operations after its division. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on the peace-keeping operations in Nicosia after its division, paving the way for introducing my 'collage city' concept in Chapter 6. This approach not only reflects a progression in my collage-making process but also signifies a deepening of my engagement with the city's complex history and present.

Chapter 5

Peace-Making Operations

Interpretative collages

This chapter opens with the following question, as introduced earlier:

How can collage be employed to understand what has been happening in the peace-making process and foster new interpretations of the transformed post-conflict texture of Nicosia?

In order to address this question, this chapter seeks to understand the process in post-conflict Nicosia and then develop its own interpretation through collage. Building upon previous chapters, which focused on Cyprus's divided history and the fragments of the divided capital, this chapter furthers the exploration, focusing on potential futures for Nicosia's revitalisation and regeneration through the creative medium of collage. This creative medium offers alternative perspectives on the peace-making process in the divided city.

It is also important for this research to provide a clear explanation of the term 'post-conflict'. Although many sources commonly define the term as 'a state of conflict in which open warfare has ended,'¹ this definition does not fully capture the complex situation on the island of Cyprus. Despite the absence of active warfare, the island remains divided, and the enduring political, economic, and social repercussions of the conflict are not yet historical in the sense that they are still unresolved. Notably, there exists significant political tension both domestically and internationally between the sides and the guarantee countries. Therefore, when the term 'post-conflict' is used in this particular context, it refers to the period following the end of the active war. This period involves comprehensive efforts to address the consequences of the conflict and facilitate a return to a state of normalcy. During the post-conflict phase, segregation persists, but there is a concerted commitment to fostering reconciliation and rebuilding. These efforts are guided by a framework of regulations and organisations working towards the restoration of peace and stability on the island.

In this chapter, the collage-making process serves two primary purposes. Firstly, it acts as background research, informing further my creative practice as a collagist-researcher for the following chapter. This involves understanding and interpreting the efforts of communities on the island who live parallel lives yet strive to coexist following Nicosia's division. Secondly, the examination of peace-making projects through collage-making offers more than just an analytical view of ongoing initiatives. It also provides insights into the potential of collage as a versatile and boundary-spanning tool within contested spaces. Collage thus emerges as both a means of interpreting

¹ Renata Summa, *Everyday Boundaries, Borders and Post Conflict Societies*, 1st Editio, Critical Security Studies in the Global South (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020); Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, *Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges, Postconflict Development*, 1st ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004); Vincent Chetail, ed., *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: A Lexicon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

these peace-making efforts and an innovative approach to understanding the broader social and cultural dynamics of the divided city. This sequence of collages was made after I was able to visit Nicosia following the Covid-19 pandemic. Here, the imaginative city of my previous collages became overlaid with my growing appreciation of the physical fabric of the city.

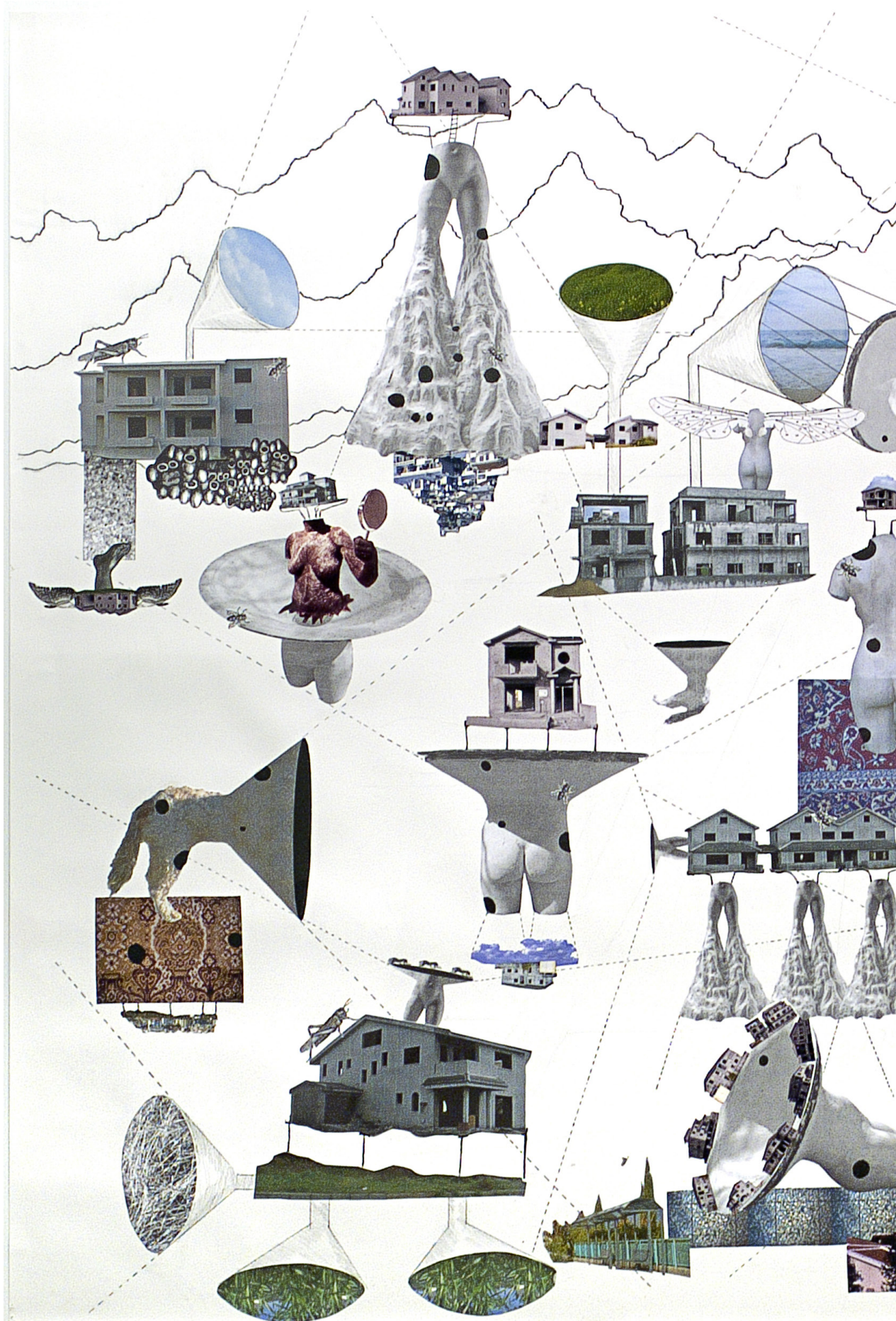
The peace-making process for Nicosia began with a collaborative effort to address a sewerage problem and became a catalyst for peace-making based on the common imperative of living together on the same island. This attempt to work together then evolved into an attempt to create a place and, ultimately, a legacy. It is important to note that each contested space has unique circumstances arising from its specific problems. As a result, each requires a special understanding and unique solutions. Therefore, it is also important to mention that this research does not aim to provide a solution to resolve Nicosia's contentious issues. Instead, through the creative practice of collage, it explores an alternative way of thinking that can develop new possibilities and perspectives for contested spaces of the divided city. Through collage-making, this chapter attempts to explore and analyse these initiatives in an attempt to understand the future envisaged for Nicosia.

This chapter, like previous chapters, employs a tripartite narrative structure to explore the relationship between collage and the peace-making process in post-conflict Nicosia. However, unlike previous chapters, it begins with a literature review. This is followed by a reflective interpretation of the collage-making process, complemented by a diary voice. This voice is again presented in a green font in the margins, offering additional insights and personal reflections. The reflective interpretation of both the research and the collage-making process is a fundamental component of this chapter. This method is chosen due to the analytic nature of the collage-making method applied and the chapter's dual focus. Firstly, collage is used as an analytical research tool, enabling a systematic examination of the subject. Secondly, it acts as a ground for interpreting the findings and the insights derived. This dual approach facilitates a more in-depth exploration of the research medium and enhances the overall narrative structure of the chapter.

The chapter begins by reading a collage work titled 'Urban Legends,' created by Cypriot artist and scholar Melita Couta. Her work offers a critical perspective on the city through the medium of collage. As introduced by Woods in the first part of this research, collage practice provides 'free spaces' for alternative interpretation without imposing any preconceived limitations, enabling new and critical perspectives to emerge and encourage greater imaginative thinking.² Thus, understanding Couta's work became

2 Lebbeus Woods, "War and Architecture", in *Pamphlet Architecture 15* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).

instrumental in making and contextualising my own collage creations for this chapter. I then focus on the peace-making process of Nicosia, shedding light on the condition of the city and the progress made so far. Examination of the peace-making process and the readings of these projects from a collagist perspective provide an understanding of the needs of and envision the desired future for, the city and question the act of imagining the future through fragments. At the end of this chapter, insights gained from these inquiries form the basis of the collage-making practice that will be discussed in the following chapter.



The Unfinished City, through collages: Reading Urban Legends

Couta's collage work titled "Urban Legend I" presents a visual assemblage of divergent and fragmented compositions. In this work, unfinished body sculptures, characterised by enigmatic black voids, intermingle with satellite dishes and incomplete concrete structures and create microcosm collages. They then create a unified composition with intricately connected dotted lines. Within this sub-composition, several satellite dishes act as portals to transient glimpses of the natural world, displaying evanescent visions of clouds, seas, and grasslands. A distinct graphic follows from the strategic placement of specific body fragments upon fragments of traditional carpet, combining human forms with elements of established cultural symbolism. Each individual body part finds its counterpart in the structural components, generating distinct yet coherent compositions. Conspicuously embedded within this intricately woven tapestry of visual storytelling is the emergence of a mountain silhouette on the horizon, imparting a profound reminder of the work's intrinsic bond with the urban landscape, underscoring the interplay between human civilisation and its natural environs.

Philosopher Jonathan L. Dronsfield's interpretation of Couta's collage posits it as a somatic phenomenon, where the fragmented elements cohere to form a distinct world detached from predetermined rules or historical contexts.¹ According to his interpretation, within this world, the constituent fragments lack fixed identities, instead occupying an enigmatic space that facilitates the exploration of possibilities beyond conventional norms. Their primary purpose in this space is communication. The fragments function as both listeners and speakers, guarding an openness that fosters the preservation of memory, culture, and spatial foundations. Additionally, these images subtly allude to forthcoming events, extending invitations to viewers to engage with the boundless expanses of this world. Although the constructed collage world appears distinct from reality, it does not exist in direct opposition to it; rather, as its precursor, enabling a critical reading of the present and offering the potential for regeneration and reformation in the days to come.² Therefore, the fragments can function as passive listeners or active transmitters, not limited to any specific content or message but embodying communication and communicability itself.

I was able to speak to Couta about her creative process. In our conversation, she referred to her body of work as "my walking route in my neighbourhood".³ Her collage thus offers a cartographic interpretation of Nicosia's ever-changing urban landscape, capturing daily metamorphoses of the city from

1 Jonathan Dronsfield, *Melita Couta: Urban Legend, Somatopia: Mapping Sites, Siting Bodies* (London: The Hellenic Centre, 2005).

2 Dronsfield.

3 Conversation with Melita Couta via video conference, October 12, 2022.

her vantage point. The collage portrays an area still undergoing development, featuring unfinished buildings interconnected by pathways. Oversized satellite dishes adorn these buildings, symbolising advanced communication technology and a yearning for connection even before completion. The incorporation of dotted lines encourages contemplation of interaction and connectivity within the urban landscape. Through her collage, Couta captures the nature of a city in flux, where technology, architecture, and societal dynamics convert in intricate ways.⁴

On the other hand, the silhouette of a mountain on the composition's horizon could permit for many readings. It stands in stark contrast to the surprising nature of the fragmental composition. This mountain seems to be Pentadaktylos in Cyprus, typically denoting the northern region. Couta mentioned that it is the view of her horizon.⁵ Thus, it represents a directional fragment, offering a sense of orientation while simultaneously allowing the controversial texture of Nicosia to permeate the work. For the work, it represents the limit, the 'other side' of the city. Although there is no political or provocative narrative in the collage, and it just gives positional information, it is also a reminder of the division. The collage therefore becomes a reflection of concern for the city's future, urging a call to address its possibilities in some manner.

In this composition, the aesthetic response to the city's interpretation and future concerns comes from the juxtaposition of everyday city-generated fragments and seemingly unrelated images. These disparate elements converge to imbue the city's unrecognised signs, narratives, and spaces with new meanings and vitality. Rather than aiming to represent space exactly or provide consensual definitions of identity, heritage, or tradition, this fragmentary narrative proposes an alternative route for connecting with the city as a resource. However, this route is shaped by the subjective reactions, observations and encounters of the artist, reflecting their concerns about the city, urban memory, and a sense of place. The artwork does not merely depict images; it references the space through them, giving rise to new metaphorical spaces that pertain to the city and render it thinkable and imaginable. These metaphorical spaces convey authentic claims and representations about the place but also position the collagist's perception as a conscious being inhabiting it, much like Couta's fragmented journey through Nicosia embodies both communication and critique.

In order to understand the collages discussed in this chapter, it is important to note my visit to the northern part of Nicosia prior to the creation of

4 Haris Pellapaisiotis, "Where Is Here? Cypriot Artist Performing Space, Retelling Place", in *Re-Envisioning Cyprus*, ed. Peter Loizos (Nicosia: University of Nicosia Press, 2010), 111–23.

5 Conversation with Melita Couta via video conference, October 12, 2022.

these works. This experience as a collagist-researcher has an impact on my perspective, transforming ideas about Nicosia into tangible fragments within these collages. Therefore, this reading of Couta's 'Urban Legends I' collage offers a critical viewpoint that seeks to elucidate spatial concepts by employing a metaphorical framework for the city. This perspective serves as an underpinning for the collages presented in this chapter, ultimately contributing to their understanding. As evident through this chapter, the language of collage has evolved, the notion of the agency of fragments has been diversified, and collage has become not only a medium guiding my research but also a mode of expression of myself as a researcher.

What follows focuses on the collaging process within the context of initiatives implemented in the city of Nicosia, which sought to promote peace and cohesion. These initiatives are critically analysed through introspective evaluation. However, achieving a comprehensive grasp of these collages requires a profound exploration of the factors influencing their origin, their underlying objectives, and the insights they generate. I will next delve into the circumstances that shaped the conception of these projects, the intentions driving their planning, and the insights envisioned for the city through their implementation.

Peace-making in Nicosia

Bi-communal cooperation towards peace-making

Following partition in 1974, high-level political negotiations were initiated under the mediation of the United Nations to resolve the Cyprus conflict. The complexity of this process, coupled with the fact that Cyprus has become one of the longest-running UN Peacekeeping missions, has led to the characterisation of the situation in Cyprus as "one of the world's most intractable conflicts".⁶ After partition, the two administrations in the north and south of the Buffer Zone faced political, economic, and social consequences. The two communities became isolated from each other, leading to a process of de-identification in the city. Both regions encountered problems related to resource access and capital investment, resulting in economic difficulties.⁷

As noted above, the Republic of Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004 brought about economic improvements in the southern part of the island,⁸

6 Sewell Chan, "Cyprus: Why One of the World's Most Intractable Conflicts Continues", *The New York Times*, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/08/world/europe/cyprus-reunification-talks.html>.

7 Panos Pashardes and Soteroula Hajispyrou, *The Economic Effects of the 1974 Events on the Greek Cypriots*, Economics Research Centre. (Nicosia, Cyprus: University of Cyprus, 2003).

8 According to CIA World Factbook, after RoC became an EU member state in 2004 and joined the Eurozone in 2008, the economy grew at a 4 per cent rate until 2009. In *CIA World Factbook*, 2004, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cy.html#Econ>.

but the process became more complicated in the northern part for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which controls a third of the island. Due to economic embargoes and international non-recognition, Northern Cyprus became isolated from the international market and heavily dependent on Turkey for financial aid. The implementation of the Turkish Lira as the official currency, along with an increasing reliance on Turkey's monetary and trade systems, has further solidified this interdependence.⁹ The financial crisis experienced by Turkey in the early 2000s also had a compounding effect on the economic crisis of the Turkish Cypriot economy. In response, Turkey implemented an austerity program in Northern Cyprus, which led to widespread social dissatisfaction and unrest. The escalation of this challenging situation has paradoxically generated conducive circumstances towards the resolution of the Cyprus Problem, leading to the formulation of the Annan Plan,¹⁰ which emphasised peace and reunification as its primary objectives. However, Greek Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan and Turkish Cypriot disillusionment soon afterwards deepened the economic crisis and resulted in Turkish interventionism in the north between 2006 and 2010, and a neoliberal restructuring of the economy.¹¹

Although these complex circumstances have persisted, as briefly described above, peace-making processes have continued in Cyprus. Despite the visible traces of conflict and division in Nicosia, it has become a ground for intertwining peace-making practices, collaborations, and narratives. In other words, the imperative to coexist, due to the parallel lives being led on the same island, has instigated a process of communication and collaboration between the two communities. This process, in turn, has facilitated the implementation of various peace-building initiatives. The next section explores narratives of peace-making in Cyprus and the relationship between these peace-making processes and spatial practices in Nicosia.

Firstly, I will examine the initial post-division communication initiative

9 Arabella Thorp, "Cyprus: A Political and Economic Overview," *House of Commons Library*, SN/IA/5208. International Affairs and Defence Section (2009).

10 In 2004, the then-United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan put forth the Annan Plan as a comprehensive peace proposal to settle the long-standing Cyprus dispute. The proposal aimed to unify Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, with both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots sharing power in a federal government. The plan included provisions for territorial adjustments, the return of displaced persons, the demilitarisation of the island, and the establishment of a United Cyprus Republic. The Annan Plan underwent separate referendums on both sides of the island in April 2004. The Turkish Cypriots voted in favour of the plan, with approximately 65% supporting it. However, the Greek Cypriots rejected the plan, with around 76% voting against it. The Greek Cypriots' rejection was due to concerns over certain aspects of the plan, including the extent of territorial adjustments and the provisions related to property rights and the return of refugees. Additionally, the plan faced political opposition as it did not fully address the grievances of both communities and was viewed by some as unjust or biased. Ultimately, the Annan Plan was not implemented.

11 Umut Bozkurt, "Turkey: From the 'Motherland' to the 'IMF of Northern Cyprus'?", *Cyprus Review (Nicosia, Cyprus : 1989)* 26, no. 1 (2014): 83–105.

addressing the infrastructure problem in Nicosia. This initiative marks the beginning of efforts to resolve the Cyprus Problem. It served as the first indication that a non-political and people-centred communication platform could be established on the island, subsequently supporting peace-building endeavours. After the successful implementation of the infrastructure system, the two communities started collaborating, leading to the development of the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP). The NMP represents the primary phase of revitalising the divided capital and encompasses several projects aimed at spatial development within the city for a unified future.

Upon reviewing the NMP, I then proceed to discuss the subsequent phase of the plan, known as the New Vision. This stage involves a revision of the NMP, introducing policy changes within the city, and formulating a plan for revitalisation through collaborative historic regeneration and conservation efforts. These readings provide insight into the role of successive urban planning as a peace-making tool and shed light on the envisioned future for the city throughout this process. However, to gain a deeper understanding of these aspects, I finally collage the key projects generated during these initiatives, critically examine the urban practices within the city, and conduct internal inquiries concerning its development through the research practice. This comprehensive examination allows for a more profound comprehension of how urban planning acts as a catalyst for peace and the envisaged trajectory for the city's future.

The pipe projects for peace-making

Bi-communal cooperation at the technical level has been actively taking place in Nicosia since the 1970s. The narratives surrounding these peace-building endeavours are significantly influenced by the fact that the initial cooperation was primarily driven by the need to address technical challenges and devise plans for the city's future development, like the shared sewerage system, necessitating coordination and comprehensive planning. Shedding light on cooperative dynamics in Nicosia, a booklet titled 'Nicosia Sewerage Project: A Plan for Nicosia, a Strategy for the World' was published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Cyprus [UNHCR Cyprus] in 1995,¹² offering valuable insights and analysis into the narratives of collaboration in the city, as can be understood from the title.

After 1974, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots suffered from sewerage problems due to the lack of a centralised system. Although this project was initiated before the partition, it faced numerous obstacles due to the conflict. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), present in Cyprus since 1965, planned the city's new sewerage and rainwater collection

¹² UNHCR CYPRUS, *The Nicosia Sewerage Project: A Plan for Nicosia, A Strategy for The World*, 1995.

system.¹³ However, the project came to a standstill in 1974 due to the de facto partition. As the existing infrastructure deteriorated and the newly planned project remained incomplete, the lack of a functioning sewerage system became a crisis with economic and political implications for both sides. Consequently, restarting the Sewerage Project became important for the city. The completion of this project required the cooperation of both communities. Under the auspices of the UNDP, negotiations were initiated to reach an agreement and establish the process and working methods for project completion. In 1977, the mayors of Nicosia, Lellos Demetriades and Mustafa Akinci, reached an agreement.¹⁴ The underlying principle of these agreements was the establishment of a framework for a shared life on the island, transcending politics. A bi-communal technical team was formed to solve the immediate practical problems. However, this team had no legal status and operated independently from the political process. The focus was solely on resolving the technical issues at hand. The goal was to set aside political complexities and rally around a common objective. Treating the city as a whole and pursuing a confidence-building policy further enhanced the plan's resolution. Considering that these decisions were made during the early stages of separation, the successful implementation of this project was significant for the Cyprus peace process and served as a precursor for future projects.

One notable aspect of this project was the ability of the parties to work together on common ground without politicisation. The UNDP, as with all UN operations, maintained neutrality and respected the sovereignty of the recipient country. However, the fact that two supposedly incompatible communities shared the same land and that local politics supported depoliticisation highlighted the importance of humanitarian and basic human needs. In an article published in 1998, Demetriades noted:

While there is certainly a political side to these kinds of projects, they are also about humanitarian issues and basic human needs, and somehow, we managed to keep them out of the usual political discussions, partly through the decision to try and do our work in silence without attracting constant media attention. For it was always my feeling that were these to become staple issues for political discussion, then the projects would have been put in jeopardy.¹⁵

13 For a more detailed explanation and analysis of the work of the UN organisation in Cyprus, see Oliver P Richmond and James Ker-Lindsay, *The Work of the UN in Cyprus: Promoting Peace and Development* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).

14 For a comprehensive explanation of the agreement process, see Anna G. Marangou, *Nicosia: A Special Capital* (Nicosia: Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, 1995), 97.

15 Lellos Demetriades, "The Nicosia Master Plan," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 8 (1998): 172–73.

Demetriades recognised a right to life that transcended politics, as emphasised in the UNHCR Cyprus report, “We had in mind during the negotiation the interest of all people in the Nicosia area, whether they are Greeks or Turks”.¹⁶ Hence, early in bi-communal cooperation, a shared understanding emerged that the Sewerage Project and subsequent projects needed to be detached from the complexities of contested political realities in order to make progress.

The successful completion of this project not only demonstrated the feasibility of realising an infrastructure initiative through the depoliticisation of community relations but also provided valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of ‘coexistence’. Despite the aftermath of the conflict, which resulted in the physical separation of both communities, they shared the same land. This shared territorial existence can be regarded as a significant motivating factor. Therefore, the imperative to coexist on the same land served as a compelling driving force for collaborative efforts. As a result, this project, initially referred to as the “great experiment”¹⁷ in the booklet, served as a trailblazing endeavour, paving the way for subsequent initiatives.

Nicosia Master Plan

Following the successful completion of the Sewerage Project, which became operational in May 1980, Demetriades and Akinci were re-elected to office. They then embarked on a collaborative initiative known as the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP). Under the guidance of the United Nations Development Programme, the NMP aimed to establish a unified planning strategy for Nicosia, ensuring the city would function as a cohesive entity following reunification at some future unspecified date. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, architects, urban planners, sociologists, and economists held regular meetings to design a comprehensive plan.¹⁸ This plan encompassed business districts, residential areas, parks, and traffic patterns with a focus on adaptability to changing conditions and the need for future flexibility. To date, this collaboration represents the most enduring and consistent cooperation between the two communities in Nicosia and across Cyprus. Therefore, the significance of the NMP lies not only in its long-lasting cooperation between the divided communities but also in the impact it has had on the historic centre of Nicosia over the years. The collaboration has been instrumental in shaping the city’s needs and addressing the challenges posed by its divided nature.

16 CYPRUS, *The Nicosia Sewerage Project: A Plan for Nicosia, A Strategy for The World*, 8.

17 CYPRUS, 5.

18 Demetriades, “The Nicosia Master Plan.”

A planning strategy for the divided city

Beginning in 1960, as the conflict intensified, Nicosia began to expand haphazardly beyond its historic centre, enclosed by the Venetian walls.¹⁹ Both parts of the city experienced the deterioration of the urban fabric due to the influx of refugees from within and outside the island, leading to the gradual abandonment of the historical centre. Additionally, the urban areas neighbouring Nicosia's Buffer Zone became unattractive and were subsequently abandoned and left to decay due to their proximity to the 'other' side.²⁰ By the early 1990s, the neglected historic centre of Nicosia attracted lower social and economic strata, primarily migrant workers, as well as light manufacturing activities such as warehouses and workshops.²¹ During this period, neither the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) nor the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) possessed the necessary legal frameworks to regulate urban development effectively. However, the Nicosia Master Plan played a crucial role in shaping the planning system on both sides by providing a vehicle for addressing this issue.

According to the 1984 Nicosia Master Plan Final Report, the NMP centred on a strategy aimed at resolving the problems arising from uneven urban development and exploring the potential reunification of the divided city. It had two phases. The first phase (1981-1984) prioritised "the improvement of the existing and future habitat and human settlement conditions of all the inhabitants of Nicosia".²² The report emphasised the need for a pragmatic and actionable plan rather than lengthy academic analyses. As such, a clear technocratic approach was formulated early on to facilitate the orderly development of an integrated city.²³

To address the divided city's challenges, a technical team of Greek and Turkish Cypriots was established to assess the situation. A diagnostic 1981 report identified Nicosia's development problems, including urban sprawl, dispersed housing development, and an oversupply of vacant building plots. The recommended approaches were to consolidate the existing city area and counteract the tendency towards sprawl. As a result of this process, the Final Report of the Nicosia Master Plan achieved a broad consensus, considering the cultural and socio-economic aspects of Nicosia *as a whole*,

19 Derya Oktay, "An Analysis and Review of the Divided City of Nicosia, Cyprus, and New Perspectives", *Geography*, 2007.

20 Zinovia Foka, "The Space In-Between: Tracing Transformative Process in Nicosia's Buffer Zone" (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 2019), 110.

21 Yael Navaro, *The Make-Believe Space, The Make-Believe Space*, 2020; Oktay, "An Analysis and Review of the Divided City of Nicosia, Cyprus, and New Perspectives".

22 Nicosia Master Plan, "Nicosia Master Plan Final Report" (Nicosia, 1984), 1.

23 Foka, "The Space In-Between: Tracing Transformative Process in Nicosia's Buffer Zone", 112.

and established a planning strategy based on five general principles:²⁴

- *Flexibility: “The plan developed two parallel scenarios for Nicosia—one considering the city as a whole and the other accounting for partition conditions.”*
- *Continuous Planning Process: “Emphasizing the need for an evolving document, subject to updates over time.”*
- *Future-Oriented Approach: “Prioritizing private activities for the city’s development while attributing a supportive role to public activities.”*
- *Containment and Limited Consolidation: “Focusing on Priority Development Areas and rational resource utilisation to delineate a strategy within Nicosia’s limits.”*
- *Prohibition of Urban Sprawl: “Directing future residential development to Priority Development Areas to prevent further sprawl.”*

The plan also set out clear objectives, such as prioritising affordable housing, fostering proximity between homes and workplaces, developing an efficient transport system, integrating green spaces and parks, incentivising the relocation of existing manufacturing units, and revitalising the historic centre. The plan also emphasised the need for effective implementation through the establishment of legal and administrative frameworks, securing financial resources, garnering public acceptance, and ensuring cost-effectiveness.

In this initial general planning strategy, the priority in this first general planning strategy was the areas where the historic city line had been bypassed, where uncontrolled growth was taking place, and the management of these areas. However, attention was also directed towards the historic Walled City and its architectural heritage located in the historic centre. As mentioned in the NMP report:

The historic centre of Nicosia stands as an exceptional exemplar of international architectural heritage. As the heart of the city, it holds an irreplaceable position and constitutes the most precious part of the NMP Area. Without it, Nicosia would lose its identity, transforming into an ordinary city. Therefore, safeguarding, enhancing, and revitalising the Walled City is of immense importance, not just for Nicosia but also for the international community, as it should continue to serve as an integral part of the city. The NMP aims to implement appropriate policies and take all necessary measures to achieve this objective.²⁵

24 Nicosia Master Plan, “Nicosia Master Plan Final Report”, 6.

25 Nicosia Master Plan, 20.

Given the strategic, and central, location of the Buffer Zone alongside the historic city centre of Nicosia, special attention has been devoted to exploring their relationship in the Physical Development Report. Dual planning strategies have been devised to address the areas where the historic and buffer zones intersect: one for the buffer zone and another for the historic zone.²⁶ Furthermore, the report highlights the historical significance of the Walled City of Nicosia, emphasising that:

*The historical, cultural, and architectural value of the Walled City of Nicosia justifies the claim that this area, along with the surrounding ensemble of the Venetian walls, the moat, and the bastions, should be considered a rare specimen of international heritage. Within the circular city, there are some exceptional and several important, well-preserved religious buildings and old houses. The irregular, narrow streets are defined by characteristic domestic architecture, mainly from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*²⁷

In this context, integrated conservation was recommended as a planning approach for decisions concerning the historical city centre within the city walls. This approach was integrated into a broader planning strategy to revitalise the centre and include considerations for land use, traffic and transport planning, and the conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and revitalisation of the architectural heritage. The plan also took into account provisions for green spaces, new open areas, cultural zones, and recreational and leisure spaces, all while preserving the residential character of the historic centre.²⁸ Special attention was placed on the Nicosia Buffer Zone, referred to in the Plan as “the most important glueing area for the functional integration of the city”.²⁹ The Plan envisioned reconnecting the north-south shopping axis from Kyrenia Gate to Ledra Street and creating squares and open spaces along the west-east historic axis from Paphos to Famagusta Gate to transform this area into a vibrant centre of activity.

The second phase of the Nicosia Master Plan (1984-1985) placed its primary focus on the historic centre and its adjacent areas.³⁰ A dedicated Area Plan was developed specifically for the centre of Nicosia, aiming to address various issues that emerged after the city’s separation. These issues included population decline, urban sprawl, the abandonment of buildings and businesses near the border, and inadequate infrastructure and amenities.

26 Foka, “The Space In-Between: Tracing Transformative Process in Nicosia’s Buffer Zone”, 114.

27 Nicosia Master Plan, “Nicosia Master Plan Final Report”, 35.

28 Nicosia Master Plan, 134–39.

29 Nicosia Master Plan, 136.

30 Nicosia Master Plan, “NMP Second Phase. Nicosia Central Area. Area Scheme Report Executive Summary”. (Nicosia, 1985).

The main objective of the plan was to preserve the rich historical heritage and urban fabric of the historic centre, stimulate development and tourism, and encourage the local population to remain within the city walls through regeneration efforts. As part of this planning, special attention was given to areas and structures that had fallen into disrepair, and specific projects were devised to rehabilitate and conserve these sites.

The core emphasis during the second phase was on the centre of Nicosia, its inhabitants, and the enhancement of their living conditions. However, the planning was not approached by recognising the city as a whole but rather by developing similar projects in both districts in such a way that the distinction was acknowledged. Each project was designed in pairs, meaning that for every project planned in the southern part of the city, there was a corresponding project in the northern part.³¹ For example, the southern counterpart of the Arabahmet neighbourhood project in the north was the Chrysaliniotissa neighbourhood, and the Omeriye area in the south was proposed as a counterpart to the Selimiye Quarter project in the north. These projects aimed to revitalise the historic centre both physically and culturally and also promote social and economic development in the area. By shifting the focus back to the Walled City, the planners aimed to rejuvenate and revitalise the significance of the city wall itself. The envisioned plans were scheduled for implementation between 1986 and 2001.

However, a Diagnostic Report presented by the Nicosia Master Plan team during a workshop held at Ledra Palace in 2004 revealed discouraging findings. Despite numerous efforts, key indicators of regeneration, including population and employment figures, exhibited a significant decline. The number of vacant and dilapidated housing units increased while restoration efforts remained relatively limited. The report identified the main challenge as the growth of suburban areas, which had become centres of population and employment growth, thereby eroding the sense of centrality and unity within Nicosia. Each side's planning authority independently produced separate Local Plans with varying levels of alignment with the principles and approaches of the Nicosia Master Plan. This predominantly regulatory approach contributed to a further loss of centrality and hindered opportunities for regeneration, posing a considerable risk of continued degradation. As a result, the report emphasised the urgent need for a comprehensive bi-communal 'Vision' and the establishment of a new framework encompassing all planning, financial, implementation, management, and governmental functions necessary for the preservation and welfare of the area.³² While the urban planning process and physical interventions carried out by the Nicosia Master Plan team did not

31 The implementation of twin projects started the aegis of UNHCR as refugee relief in 1987.

32 Christos Hadjichristos, "Cyprus: Nicosia and Its D-visions", *Architectural Design* 76, no. 3 (2006): 12–19.

provide a solution to the issue of partition, they underscored the necessity for a more focused and targeted project that could shape the future of the divided city.

As a result of several international political agreements, bi-communal communication and contact underwent significant changes in 2003. The signing of the Act of Accession to the EU led to new decisions being made regarding the city.³³ Subsequently, with Cyprus joining the EU in May 2004, communication and reconciliation were further improved, positively impacting both communities and fostering collaborations. Bi-communal contact, cooperation, and collaboration have gained momentum across Cyprus, with Nicosia spearheading most of the initiatives. In addition to being a symbol of a divided capital, the city became a promising catalyst for communication and reconciliation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Recognising its significance, the master planning committee designated the city as the 'core' of the bi-communal 'New Vision' planning strategy.³⁴

The New Vision for Nicosia

After evaluating the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP), a new planning strategy for Nicosia was planned. According to the diagnostic report, resolving the Cyprus Problem would be closely tied to the revitalisation of the city centre. However, accomplishing this required developing a 'common vision' for the two sides. The report stressed that this vision should revolve around creating economic and social regeneration opportunities by connecting the heritage of the historic centre with activities that attract population and investment. Consequently, the new perspective directly linked the strategy to Nicosia, highlighting the necessity to alter its urban realities both physically and socio-economically. The initial NMP strategy of perceiving the city with a broader perspective centred on its inhabitants shifted towards fostering a shared

33 In the realm of international relations, Turkey implemented a partial lifting of restrictions on free movement in Cyprus. This decision was enacted on April 23, 2003, shortly after Cyprus signed the EU Accession Treaty on April 16, 2003. The Turkish Cypriots played a crucial role in influencing this decision, as they recognised the significance of not missing out on the opportunities presented by European Union membership. Moreover, the accession of Cyprus to the EU has had a substantial impact on this process, garnering international and economic support for future projects. These political advancements ultimately ensured the opening of a physical crossing point at Ledra Palace in Nicosia, facilitating communication between the two sides. Over time, two additional crossing points, namely Ledra Street and Agios Dhmetios (Metehan Crossing), were opened in Nicosia. These gateways have served as catalysts for the realisation of future plans for the city, fostering cooperation, bi-communal contact, and collaboration between the two communities in relation to Nicosia.

34 With the revision of the Nicosia Master Plan, the updated planning approach was referred to as the "New Vision". Given the city's growth and development, a significant focus of the planning process was placed on the Walled City - the area encompassing the boundaries of the Venetian walls of Nicosia. This specific area was designated as the core of Nicosia, highlighting the potential of its pivotal role in the city's transformation. Nicosia Master Plan, "New Vision for the Core of Nicosia Diagnostic Report: Executive Summary" (Nicosia, n.d.).

vision centred on the city itself, directly addressing the Cyprus problem. As a result, the target audience of this endeavour was the Turkish and Greek Cypriots rather than the later migrants who had become the current city inhabitants and their needs.

To execute this new initiative, a committee was appointed, similar to the one in the NMP, and the project was named the New Vision for the Core of Nicosia. This fresh planning strategy focused on a narrower spatial area than the NMP, specifically, the historic centre of the city and the north-south commercial/business line. However, the new project identified potential risk factors before initiating the planning process. These included the ongoing deterioration of landmarks and buildings, which held potential value for the future and carried Nicosia's cultural and historical heritage. Additionally, risks had the loss of centrality, the opportunity for reusing viable housing and buildings, as well as the undefined nature of the Buffer Zone. Consequently, the New Vision project structured its main objectives around addressing these risks. The primary aim was to devise a strategy to reverse existing problems and kickstart a regeneration process in the inner walled area, representing the city's core. It was also stated that this process would play a crucial role in integration following the resolution of the Cyprus Problem.

Cultural heritage as a new planning strategy

After examining multiple alternative scenarios aimed at revitalising Nicosia's core, encompassing aspects such as social regeneration, commercial regeneration, integrated regeneration, and multifaceted approaches, the focus ultimately gravitated towards the city's cultural heritage. Adopting the "Urban Heritage Based Regeneration Strategy" emerged as the most promising avenue, leveraging cultural tourism and education as primary catalysts for fostering future residential and commercial activities. According to this strategy, despite the prevailing challenges, the Walled City Area is endowed with significant cultural value, and the Core Area offers numerous advantages attributable to its cultural heritage and prominent landmarks.³⁵

This strategy envisioned connecting Nicosia's rich heritage with the cultural 'special interest' tourism and education sector, presenting a vision for future transformation and offering numerous opportunities for sustainable development. The emphasis lay on leveraging the exceptional cultural monuments and traditional buildings within the Walled City to attract external demand, such as specialised tourism and education. The goal was to transform the Walled City's history into a catalyst for sustainable development, thereby facilitating further residential and commercial investments. Moreover, the outer business centre would also benefit from this strategy, experiencing

35 Hadjichristos, "Cyprus: Nicosia and Its D-visions".

a significant boost in commercial vitality. The Buffer Zone also presented opportunities for tourism and educational facilities, effectively bridging the Walled City with the broader vision outlined in the Nicosia Master Plan, both economically and socio-culturally. Thus, with this strategy, it was hoped that the cultural vitality of the city would play a central role in propelling the economic growth of the historic centre, with the added effect of fostering social rejuvenation by supporting residents and encouraging new businesses.³⁶

New proposals had emerged, aligning with the primary frameworks established by the renewal strategy. These proposals took into consideration both the accomplishments and gaps in the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP). Acknowledging the shortcomings of past planning efforts, particular attention was given to public-private partnerships and a more coordinated approach to economic and financial mechanisms. The aim was to ensure that projects were executed in accordance with these decisions. To this end, a joint authority was suggested to assume powers and responsibilities. Furthermore, to enhance the sustainability of projects in economic terms, it is planned that private investments will be undertaken collaboratively for both regions. Additionally, “special development” areas had been identified to attract private investment and ensure financial viability.³⁷ It can be interpreted that the revitalisation of Nicosia is closely tied to an economic development plan that leverages the city’s cultural and historical heritage. However, it should be mentioned that the desired joint administration and institutional committees have not been fully realised as intended. Some key projects, while eventually completed, faced lengthy delays and numerous political and economic challenges. These issues primarily arose from the fragmented nature of the city, hindering the smooth progress of the shared vision. Particularly, the Buffer Zone in Nicosia played a significant role in these challenges, which will be explored in the next section.

Limitations of Nicosia’s New Vision

The Buffer Zone in Nicosia had not been concretely addressed in the NMP or in discussions about the Cyprus Problem, despite being described as a ‘glueing area’ with potential for future urban fabric if reunification occurs.³⁸ However, the emergence of the New Vision offered a fresh perspective, explicitly advocating for the unification of Nicosia and placing significant importance on the regeneration of the Buffer Zone as a crucial element of a cultural heritage-based revival. As part of this initiative, research and

36 Nicosia Master Plan, “New Vision for the Core of Nicosia Diagnostic Report: Executive Summary”.

37 Nicosia Master Plan, “New Vision for the Core of Nicosia Final Report” (Nicosia, n.d.), 25.

38 Nicosia Master Plan, “New Vision for the Core of Nicosia Phase II. Outline Plan (Final Report)”, (Nicosia, 2005).

surveys were proposed to assess the condition of the buildings within the Buffer Zone, revealing a pressing need for urgent maintenance and renovation, particularly for architecturally and environmentally significant structures that may be considered monuments. The New Vision further highlighted that the desired revitalisation of the city, especially its historical city wall, is contingent upon the Buffer Zone's integration into the overall historic centre.³⁹ Nonetheless, the Buffer Zone had long been a persistent obstacle and manifestation of the Cyprus Problem, emphasising the inherent interdependency of this planning initiative on achieving a resolution to the underlying political issue. As a result, the New Vision's success relies on effectively addressing and resolving the Buffer Zone, ultimately paving the way for a unified and regenerated Nicosia.

In line with this vision, the future outlook for Nicosia emphasises the interconnectedness between the city's aspirations and the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. The transformation process prioritised the Buffer Zone, seeking to redefine the relationship between cultural heritage and urban development economics, the collaboration between the public and private sectors, and the connection between the people and their cultural heritage and place in Nicosia. All of these efforts aimed to breathe new life into the Buffer Zone and ultimately led to the reunification of Nicosia. However, it is crucial to recognise that progress has been limited due to the persistent division on the island, and a definitive resolution of the Cyprus Problem remains elusive. Consequently, the implementation of Nicosia's New Vision remains constrained by these challenges.

Cultural heritage in Cyprus, like many other aspects of the island's history, is highly contested due to its multi-layered past encompassing diverse societies. During the colonial period, the British emphasised preserving buildings associated with Western histories, such as Hellenic, Venetian, or Lusignan, while neglecting Ottoman and Islamic monuments, which they considered non-monumental.⁴⁰ This selective preservation approach gave rise to conflicting perspectives, with Greek Cypriots viewing Hellenic monuments as evidence of their Greek heritage, while Turkish Cypriots saw the exclusion of Ottoman and Islamic monuments as exclusionary and disregarding their cultural identity.⁴¹ The struggle over cultural heritage further intensified during and after the conflict, leading to the destruction and neglect of numerous heritage sites on both sides of the divide.

However, the New Vision for Nicosia takes a deliberate and intentional approach to safeguarding and preserving the city's cultural heritage in an

39 Nicosia Master Plan, 40–43.

40 Julie Scott, "World Heritage as a Model for Citizenship: The Case of Cyprus," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 8, no. 2 (2002).

41 Scott.

effort to establish a shared vision for the future. In doing so, this initiative acknowledges the importance of resolving the ongoing Cyprus Problem, and it may even carry the hope that the success of the cultural heritage project could contribute to the overall settlement of the broader issue. Yet, given that the Cyprus Problem remains unresolved, the New Vision stands out more for the challenges it faces rather than solely for its positive intentions. Thus, the cultural heritage struggle in Cyprus reflects the complex historical and political dynamics of the island. The New Vision's commitment to preserving Nicosia's heritage represents a step towards a shared vision, but its success is intertwined with the resolution of the long-standing Cyprus Problem. As the issue persists, it can be said that the New Vision remains a vision defined by its inherent challenges rather than its positive aspirations alone.

The peace-making process in Nicosia

To summarise them, the first significant discussion of peace-making arose with the sewerage project, which required joint cooperation from both Cypriot communities in the 1970s. This forced process demonstrated that the two communities could work together effectively. The United Nations-brokered committee, promoting cooperation based on community interests and depoliticisation, set the foundation for subsequent projects, inspiring the peace strategy known as 'post-conflict peacebuilding' and emphasising depoliticisation as a critical strategic component for all future endeavours. Thus, the first lesson is that even if problems persist between two communities, coexistence requires communication and cooperation, which can be successfully achieved in a people-centred and non-political environment.

This successful bi-communal cooperation also sparked hope for resolving the Cyprus Problem and reunifying Nicosia. It led to the establishment of the enduring Nicosia Master Plan, aiming to address urban issues, foster communication between the two communities, and prepare for potential reunification. However, political, economic, and social controversies surrounding the separate city made it difficult to realise this strategy. Despite the NMP's efforts to plan for peace in Nicosia, the approach proved exclusionary for the population and failed to achieve its desired goals. Therefore, although a peaceful endeavour is being fought for in a non-political atmosphere, the realities of the divided cities have revealed themselves. All peaceful visions of the future planned by the rulers and administrators cannot be realised without first discussing the acceptance of the inhabitants and the real abolition of division.

In the early 2000s, the planning strategy underwent a radical change with the introduction of the "New Vision". This new vision sought to create a shared

perspective for the city and its inhabitants, leveraging the cultural heritage of the historic centre to attract private investment, stimulate economic growth, and promote social regeneration. The strategy's primary focus was Nicosia's Buffer Zone, recognised as a common heritage for all Cypriots. However, acknowledging the Buffer Zone as such required acceptance from both sides, necessitating a departure from divisive ethnic-nationalist connotations and challenging official historical narratives. Due to its visibility and tangibility, the Buffer Zone's cultural ownership, meanings, and representations remained contested. Thus, to align Nicosia with a cohesive cultural offering, it was understood that the city must be reconceptualised beyond divisive ethno-nationalist associations, and the traumatic past should be addressed. Otherwise, as previously discussed, any planning efforts will be limited and unsustainable over time. This also implied that the realities of division must be recognised.

Each strategy, including the sewerage project, the Nicosia Master Plan, and the New Vision, ultimately prompted discussions on peace-making in the city. Nevertheless, ongoing division, economic challenges, and political and social tensions persist. Consequently, although some projects have been realised on a case-by-case basis, they have failed to produce the desired results. It can be said that peacebuilding practices in the city have been considered place-building and heritage-building. The need for a depoliticised environment and the effects of the recent conflict have thus been ignored for peacebuilding purposes. This observation indicates a lack of a comprehensive reconceptualisation of the city beyond divisive ethno-nationalist connotations, and the need to address its traumatic past to develop a holistic cultural view. The depoliticised perspective and the disregard for the conflict and the Buffer Zone as anything other than a loss may be contributing to a denial of recent history.

In Nicosia, the necessity of collaborative efforts to address common challenges has gradually evolved into a quest for peace in Cyprus. This ongoing endeavour has given rise to the concept of creating spaces for peace, fostering a depoliticised atmosphere. As the process of making space in the divided city faced challenges, it led Cypriots to embrace their shared heritage, fuelling a desire for peace centred on preserving historical legacies. While these dynamic strategic approaches have revealed numerous opportunities for the city's development, the ultimate objective of reunification and lasting peace remains elusive. The next section focuses on the key projects implemented in the city.

Key Projects Towards the Peace-Making Process of Nicosia⁴²

Despite the inability of key projects to achieve peace and reunification, they offer invaluable narratives about Nicosia's history and identity. The primary goal of this creative practice-based research, however, is not to conduct a detailed analysis of these projects or discuss their outcomes. Instead, by appropriating and examining them, fresh perspectives emerge, allowing for a deeper understanding of the city's potentialities. This study employs a critical examination through collage, facilitating the exploration of diverse approaches and a deeper understanding of both overt and covert urban needs.

Through a sequence of collages of key projects, this part of the chapter endeavours to illuminate potential pathways for envisioning Nicosia's future in relation to its rich historical past. Approaching these projects through the lens of collage introduces a critical perspective, given its inherently political and thought-provoking nature. Collage, by its very nature, defies established or desirable norms, making it particularly relevant in an environment characterised by depoliticisation and socio-economic challenges, where the city's complex conflicts have often been disregarded. Embracing the provocative and unconstrained nature of collage offers an alternative, transformative perspective on the city, unlocking fresh opportunities for innovative thinking and reimagining the divided city.

The projects in question were proposed as a part of Nicosia's regeneration efforts during and following the Nicosia Master Plan. Their implementation aimed to transform the city into a focal point that transcends its contested identity, with each project adopting distinct processes and approaches tailored to its specific context and location. In this section, the focus lies on key projects within Nicosia, namely: the twin projects of Selimiye in the North and Omeriye in the South; the twin projects of Chrysaliniotissa in the South and Arabahmet Quarter in the North; the Eleftheria Square development project in the South, an integral part of the Venetian Walls; and finally, the survey of the Buffer Zone. Each of these projects symbolises a collective effort to reshape Nicosia and work towards lasting peace and unity.

42 This section explores the aims and future goals of projects in divided Nicosia, including their context and challenges due to the city's status as two separate capitals. Southern Cyprus' EU membership adds complexity to the situation. Notably, many of the projects discussed in this research have received funding from various sources, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Bi-Communal Development Programme (BDP) grants funded by USAID and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as local funds and EU Structural Fund assistance. However, support is limited or absent for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, unrecognized by the EU, impacting project implementation and understanding.

Selimiye and Omeriye Improvement Projects

The neighbourhoods of Selimiye in the north and Omeriye in the south are strategically located in the central part of Walled Nicosia, making them an integral part of the city's historical core. Prior to their segregation, both districts held prominent positions as trade centres, boasting a remarkable collection of historic buildings and bustling market centres that spoke of their commercial significance. However, the closure of the street connecting these two districts due to the buffer zone resulted in a notable decline in their vitality. To address this issue and potentially pave the way for a future merger, the proposed project aimed to revitalise this historical connection between the North and South while also breathing new life into the city's historic core. The envisioned plan entailed restoration and landscaping efforts focused on the historical buildings in the area. As a twin project of NMP, the Selimiye Development Project in the North was controlled by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, while the Omeriye area in the South fell under the responsibility of the Republic of Cyprus.

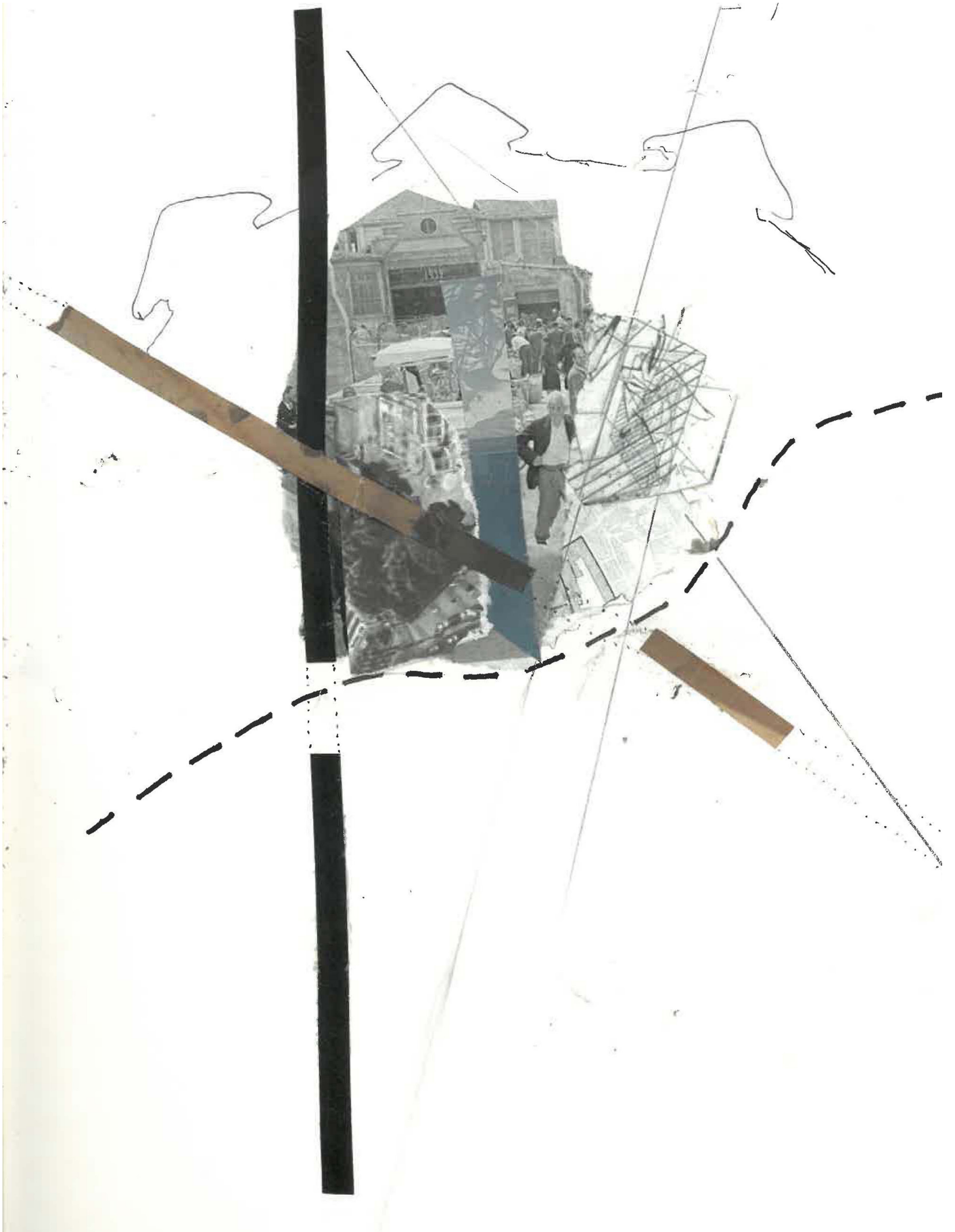
Selimiye Quarter

The Selimiye district houses some of the most significant monuments within Walled Nicosia. Idadi Street, one of the noteworthy streets within the Venetian walls, serves as a primary access point to the Selimiye area from the northwest. Arasta Street, situated in close proximity to the Ledra Street checkpoint, provides another important link between the two parts of the city. Selimiye comprises a mix of commercial and residential buildings, including rows of Ottoman, Venetian, and Lusignan-era houses, as well as British colonial stone masonry structures. Notable landmarks in Selimiye include the Kadi Mentis Mansion (originally a Lusignan residence, now used by the Turkish Cypriot Union of Municipalities), the Selimiye Mosque (formerly St. Sophia Gothic Cathedral), the Bedestan (previously St. Nicholas Church), Haydar Pasa Mosque (formerly St. Catherine's Church), the Chapter House, the ancient Buyuk Han, Kumarcilar Han, Buyuk Hamam, and the Market from the British period. However, due to the presence of the Buffer Zone, the development of this area is restricted, and remnants of past conflicts can still be observed in the surrounding areas.

The process of creating collages further emphasises the limits imposed on this area.⁴³ Situated at the core of the Walled City, it once thrived as a vibrant commercial area before the city's division with the Buffer Zone, resulting in the loss of its former vitality. Although it still functions as a commercial centre in the Walled City, the collaged composition shows how it remains in a state of intense congestion. The reason for NMP's aim for this

43 - From my research diary on 2 February 2023.

During my visit to Nicosia, I explored the market in this neighbourhood. My attention was captivated by a wall at the end of the market aisles, within the lively market building. I discovered a small aperture in the wall. Peering through it, a glimpse of the Buffer Zone revealed itself to me...Despite not knowing its historical state, it was evident that the market maintained its commercial importance. Conversations with shopkeepers highlighted how the opening of the crossing point at Ledra Street had positively impacted their businesses. Yet, it became clear to me that removing the wall blocking the market's rear entrance is crucial for the area to regain its former vibrancy - in the situation of a united future, if it is possible - although the feasibility of this remains in question. In collage, I sought to capture the area confined between significant landmarks: the Venetian walls to the north, the Buffer Zone to the south, the primary trade axis to the west, and a densely populated area to the east. Each line in my sketches seems to navigate towards the Buffer Zone, symbolising the area's critical role in the city's future, particularly if a united Nicosia is possible. This area is densely populated and holds promise for regeneration and developments. In defining the boundaries of this unique urban space, which is central yet paradoxically confined, I initially grappled with selecting specific fragments. I soon realised that the true importance lies not in the individual pieces but in depicting the overall enforced fragmentation and the resulting loss of the area's historic character. It became clear that the significance of collage-making is in engaging with the fragments intuitively, beyond their mere visual aspects. This space, emblematic of both constraints and hope, seems to mirror the aspiration for a unified Nicosia, unburdened by political divisions and awaiting the removal of barriers that impede its unity. As my collage-making journey continues, the final composition remains uncertain. However, the narrative of this area persists, compelling me to document its history and its potential. The interplay of history, politics, commerce, and humanity within its confines makes it a profoundly significant area for Nicosia's future, a narrative I am keen to explore through my collages.



2 - Collaging Selimiye

area can be understood in relation to its future possibilities. Thus, this area holds significant importance for the potential reunification of the city. As can be seen from the collage, it is positioned as the symbolic heart of the city where all axes intersect in some way; envisioned as an important focal point in a unified Nicosia's future. Despite the fragmentary complexity of the collage and the complicated political situation of the city, the composition offers glimpses of hope and potential narratives about the city's future, weaving stories between the fragments.

On the other hand, this collage makes a number of inquiries. It questions the delimitation of the city. It serves as a visual reflection of the past vibrancy and the present congestion and unfinishedness of this area, which can be considered the heart of the city, inviting us to reflect on the potential reunification and revitalisation of the area through the fragments presented. Thus, in contrast to the constraints of planning to date, by drawing attention to these constraints, it offers a means to articulate the possibility of a possible united Nicosia, if one is possible. [2]

Omeriye Quarter

Omeriye Quarter was historically one of the most affluent areas in the city, reflecting its cultural and civic significance. Like Selimiye, Omeriye is home to several architecturally significant buildings, including the former Augustinian monastery of St. Marie, which was converted into a mosque during the sixteenth century, and the Omeriye bathhouse. Like Selimiye, parts of Omeriye are also constrained by the Buffer Zone. Many buildings in these areas are currently used as workshops and storage spaces.

The collage of Ömeriye, much like Selimiye, has sparked similar contemplations. It serves as a link that reflects the continuous flow from the North to the South. Nevertheless, akin to Selimiye, Ömeriye's collage also highlights the issues of congestion and fragmentation experienced in the area. The division of the city has resulted in the heart of Walled City being split into two separate halves, each striving to narrate its own story within the confines imposed upon them. However, their objective still remains to communicate similar narratives.⁴⁴ [3]

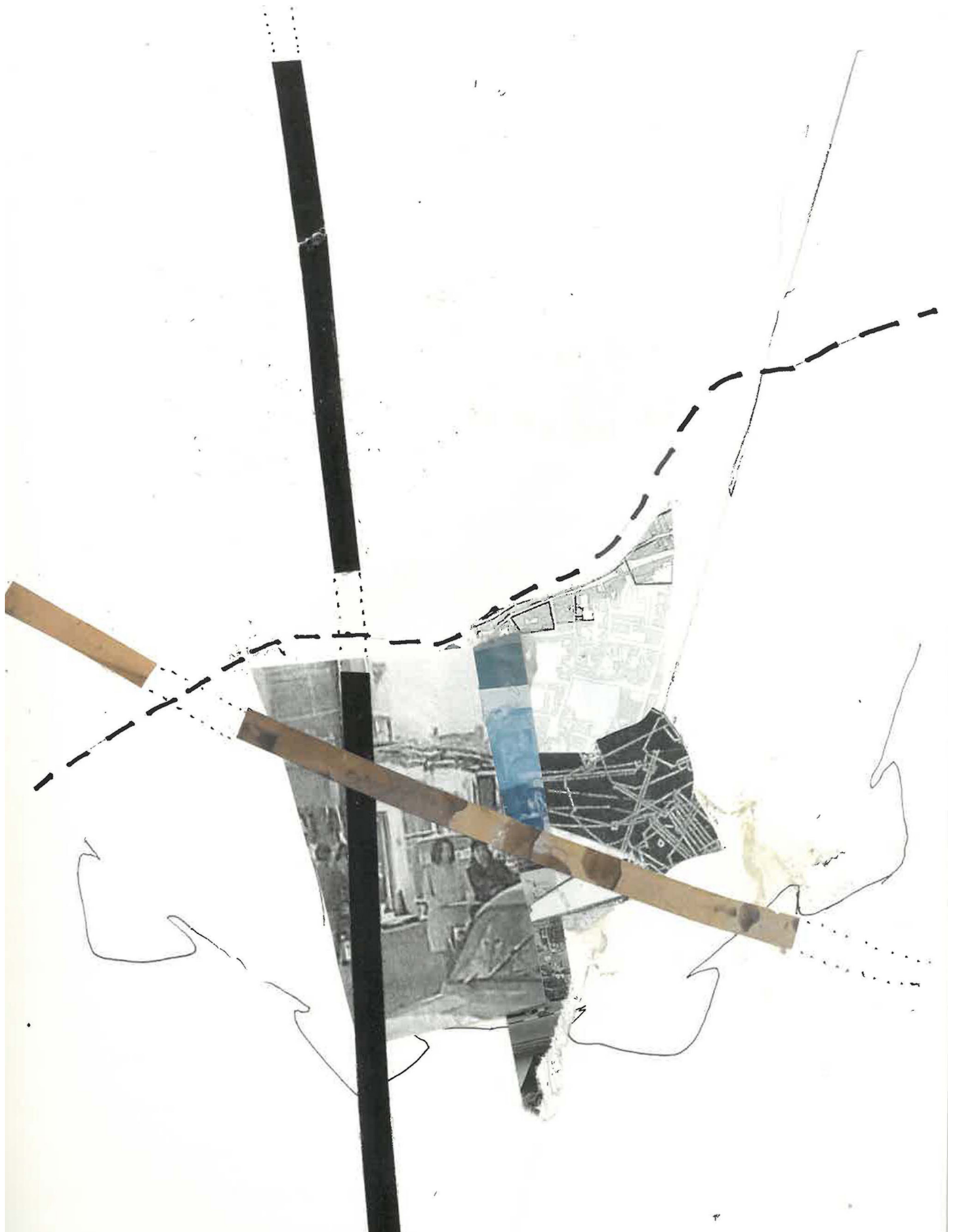
The Selimiye-Omeriye project underscores the urgent need to revive the commercial character of these neighbourhoods and attract visitors to the historic core. The importance of this project becomes evident when considering the significant buildings within these areas. However, despite focusing on these key locations, it is important to acknowledge that

44 - From my research diary on 4 February 2023. - In my latest collage, I explored the themes of division and unity, drawing inspiration from the reflection of the North in the South. This area, yearning for unity, finds itself severed by the Buffer Zone and constrained by other axes of the city. During the collage-making process, I realised that the fragments I selected, regardless of their origins, echoed the region's chaotic nature. My approach began with identifying the city's traces and outlining the axes, providing a foundational structure for the composition.

However, I prioritised the placement of fragments, aiming to create a sense of gathering while simultaneously evoking discomfort through their arrangement. The introduction of cutting and delimiting axes further highlighted this uneasy coexistence within the collage.

A striking feature of the collage is the presence of dashed lines, symbolising the Buffer Zone. Although there may be only one such line, it commands the viewer's attention, emphasising its powerful role in dividing the composition.

Through this collage, I sought to express the complex emotions associated with this area—a longing for unity amidst divisions. The collage serves as a visual representation of the region's intricate challenges, inviting viewers to reflect on the Buffer Zone's impact and the prospects of a more unified future.



3 - Collaging Omeriye

Nicosia has been marred by division and conflict. While these projects are collaborative efforts, they are still separate endeavours. Thus, it is important to note that this research does not delve into the intricate processes or analyses of these projects; instead, it concentrates on a self-collage process aimed at comprehending the project's potential.

Focusing on collage-making, the collages reflect the important location and distinctive characteristics of both sites within the city. The neighbourhood's proximity to the crossing point and prominent axes define their identities distinctly. However, owing to their adjacency to the border, these neighbourhoods also bear conspicuous signs of division. The collages exhibit an unfinished quality, as the gestures of the prominent axes daringly cross the symbolic dotted line representing division, while the fragments concentrate on the areas, delineating their boundaries. These fragments serve to emphasise the density present in both areas. Moreover, the orientation of the fragments indicates an effort to establish the city's core. The presence of the Buffer Zone significantly affects both collages, effectively dividing them during the creation process. As a result, these collages reveal that the highlighted areas hold strategic importance within the city, offering substantial potential for urban regeneration. Nonetheless, the interventions in these areas seem constrained, unable to transcend their respective zones without encroaching upon the Buffer Zone. Moreover, these interventions are unable to eradicate the lingering signs of division. Consequently, both collages question not only an examination of the city's-imposed boundaries but also the artificial boundaries imposed by the Buffer Zone.

Conservation Processes in Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa

The implementation of rehabilitation programmes for Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa began in 1989, with a primary focus on preserving the historical and architectural value of these traditional residential neighbourhoods situated within the Walled City. Due to their proximity to the Buffer Zone, these areas experienced a population decline, resulting in the deterioration of buildings and the overall environment. The rehabilitation programs aimed to address this issue by conserving the traditional street patterns, buildings, and old urban fabric that have existed since the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Alongside safeguarding the cultural and architectural legacy of these areas, the projects sought to stimulate private investment, improve quality of life, foster a sense of belonging, attract younger and economically active households, and encourage existing residents to remain in the old core.⁴⁵ Ultimately, the goal was to integrate

45 Oktay, "An Analysis and Review of the Divided City of Nicosia, Cyprus, and New Perspectives".

these historic areas into the contemporary city.

The selection of Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa as the initial focus of rehabilitation efforts under the Nicosia Master Plan emphasises the historical and architectural significance of the Walled City. These neighbourhoods have successfully maintained their original street patterns, urban fabric, architectural design, and unique environmental character. By prioritising these areas, the NMP demonstrates its commitment to preserving the local architectural heritage. Moreover, the proximity of Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa to the Buffer Zone and the Venetian walls of Nicosia, as well as their connection to the division process, further enhances their importance. These neighbourhoods hold particular significance in the context of the historical conflict as they served as a refuge for many displaced Cypriots, leading to an identity crisis.⁴⁶ Subsequently, demographic changes occurred, resulting in abandonment and the settlement of other migrants in these areas. Following the conflict, Cypriots often avoided these neighbourhoods. However, recent restoration efforts have brought about significant transformations. The completion of restoration works has revitalised and transformed these neighbourhoods into tourist attractions.

Arabahmet Neighbourhood

The Arabahmet neighbourhood, situated in the western part of North Nicosia, lies at the junction of the Venetian walls of the Walled City and the boundaries of the Buffer Zone. Its narrow streets, which have evolved organically, are adorned with single or two-storey houses, some featuring bay windows, creating silhouettes that bear witness to Cyprus' rich history. Throughout the years, this area has served as a residential hub for various communities.

At the north end of the Arabahmet neighbourhood runs Sehit Salahi Şevket Street, formerly known as 'Victoria Street'. This prominent thoroughfare boasts notable landmarks, including the Arap Ahmet Mosque (1845), which

46 In her book, Navaro-Yashin provides an in-depth exploration of the aftermath situation in these two neighbourhoods, specifically focusing on the experiences of migrant people. Her work sheds light on the challenges and dynamics faced by these individuals in the context of the revitalisation and transformation of Arap Ahmet and Chrysaliniotissa. By closely examining the experiences and perspectives of migrants, Navaro-Yashin offers valuable insights into the social and cultural implications of the redevelopment efforts in these areas. Similarly, Papadakis' research, conducted prior to the opening of the crossing point, also touches upon similar perspectives related to the neighbourhoods in question. His study provides valuable observations and analysis regarding the socio-cultural landscape, as well as the perceptions and experiences of various stakeholders involved in the process of revitalisation. By examining the perspectives of different actors, Papadakis offers valuable context and understanding of the complex dynamics at play within Arap Ahmet and Chrysaliniotissa - Yael Navaro-Yashin, *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Policy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Yiannis Papadakis, *Echoes from the Dead Zone : Across the Cyprus Divide* (London ; New York : New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed in the U.S.A. by Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

dates back to the Ottoman Empire period (1571-1878), at its northern end, and the Roman Catholic Church at its southern end, leading towards the Paphos Gate. Historically, the vicinity of the church was a bustling centre for Armenians during and after the Ottoman period. However, due to the Turkish Cypriot-Greek Cypriot conflict in late 1963, Armenians relocated from the district to areas predominantly inhabited by Greek Cypriots.⁴⁷ During the conflict time, the area became abandoned, but with the initiation of the Nicosia Master Project, it underwent a process of revitalisation.

This area holds significant importance in the city's conservation plan due to its strategic location, historical significance, and the profound impact of the conflict attached to it. Through my collage-making experiment, I discovered that this area comprises multiple layers that convey messages distinct from the original intentions of the city planners.⁴⁸

Despite the Arabahmet neighbourhood's inherent limitations, such as the Buffer Zone, the Venetian Walls and their moat, the Paphos Gate and intersecting streets, it possesses tangible and intangible values that contribute to its unique character. Acting as a shield against the spaces created by the city's conflicts, it is situated between the United Nations-protected Venetian border to the west and the prominent Ledra Palace opposite.

Based on my personal interpretation of the collage, when all these characteristics converge, the area holds immense potential as a space for expressing urban narratives with profound resonance. The fragmentary identity of the neighbourhood intertwines with the city's historical backdrop and encompasses the diverse identities of the nations and migrants who have called it home, serving as a testament to the historical conflicts it has endured. Consequently, the decision to regenerate the area in accordance with the Nicosia Master Plan is not only appropriate but also crucial for the city's future.

However, during the process of creating my collage, I realised that the fragmentary expression of the area allows for an alternative reading that relates to the city's recent past. In addition to the Nicosia Master Plan's emphasis on renovating historic areas and buildings, the collage perceives this area as more than a mere collection of neighbourhoods and structures. It encourages an awareness of the layers while avoiding their separation, embracing them as a unified composition. Through this alternative reading, the collage references

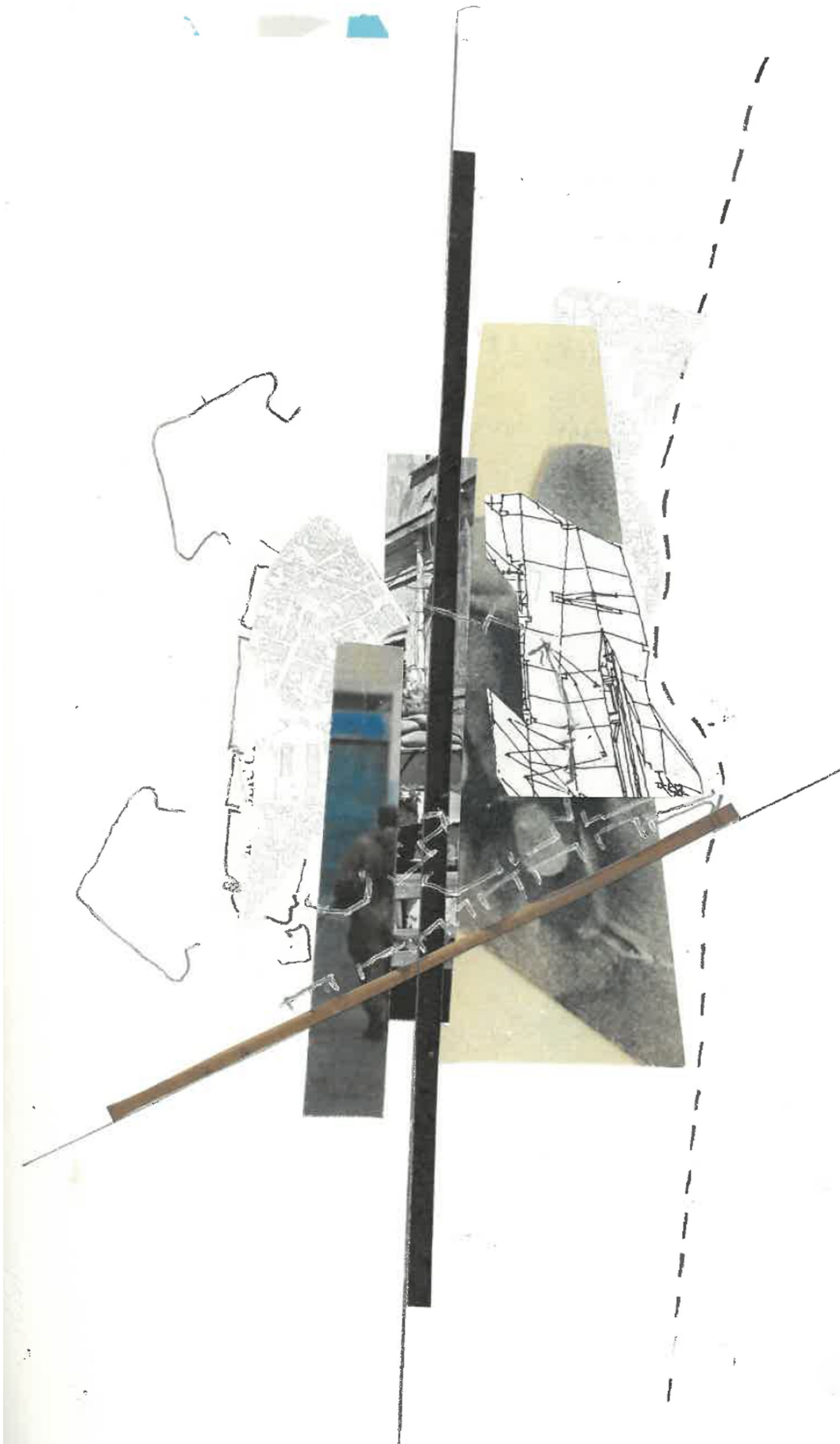
48 - From my research diary on 9 February 2023.

I vividly recall the moment I sat on the Venetian walls, at the point where the Arabahmet area meets the walls. As I sipped coffee, my attention was caught by a UN vehicle patrolling nearby. Directly opposite me stood the Ledra Palace, and diagonally, I could glimpse the monitoring point for the Greek area. This scene, framed by a building that is both historically significant and recently restored, captivated and momentarily perplexed me. It stirred a multitude of thoughts and highlighted the immense importance of this area in the city of Nicosia.

Every part of Nicosia has its charm, but this specific area serves as a portal to diverse narratives, rich in historical context. Rather than sketching the area right away, I chose to immerse myself in its traces, exploring the deep meanings tied to its well-defined boundaries. When I began incorporating fragments into my collage, I realised that the act of selection was more crucial than the specific fragments themselves. I just picked, not to look. Nonetheless, I was drawn to including elements that hinted at the past: a faintly visible hand, a building straddling the border, and a partially obscured soldier. These pieces harmonized with a drawing that flowed along these axes, conveying a sense of power and resilience.

I might be overthinking it, but I couldn't help but ponder whether the space's initial renovation was influenced by the UN's presence and its interactions with the Greek Cypriots. The axes' deliberate orientation, overlooking the Buffer Zone and Greek territory, led me to contemplate this possibility. Engaging in this collage-making process has deepened my understanding that this place could evolve into a symbol of strength, reflecting the complex dynamics embedded within its fragments.

47 Zihni Turkan and Esra Koksaldi, "A Cultural Heritage in the Walled City of Nicosia:" Dervish Pasha Street" from the Past to the Present," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 42 (2019): 275–90.



the city's recent history and evokes new inquiries, prompting us to question the intricate relationship between the urban fabric and urban memory. It invites us to consider the neighbourhood as an alternative space, one that transcends traditional boundaries and provides a platform for new perspectives. Thus, I question whether the effort to regenerate an area that has lost its identity due to the conflicts between the Buffer Zone, the crossing points and the 'other' side, and which has lost its identity due to the conflicts, can be read as an effort to unilaterally erase the traces of these conflicts, despite the contested texture imposed on it. [4]

Chrysaliniotissa Neighbourhood

The Chrysaliniotissa neighbourhood, like the Arapahmet neighbourhood, holds immense historical significance as one of the oldest districts situated within the fortified city of Nicosia. Its nomenclature is derived from the renowned French-Byzantine Church of Panayia Chrysaliniotissa, which occupies a prominent position among the city's ecclesiastical landmarks.⁴⁹ Despite its rich cultural heritage, Chrysaliniotissa has endured the ramifications of conflicts, resulting in economic and social distress in the aftermath of the city's division. Located at the eastern periphery of the Walled City of Nicosia, Chrysaliniotissa shares borders with the Buffer Zone. Notably, it encompasses the terminus of Hermes Street, a bustling commercial thoroughfare in Nicosia that thrived before the city's division. Similar to the Arabahmet neighbourhood, Chrysaliniotissa has also undergone a process of revitalisation facilitated by the implementation of the Nicosia Master Plan.

Arabahmet and this area are considered interconnected projects due to their shared characteristics and features. Chrysaliniotissa also holds a rich historical background and faces limitations imposed by the city's framework and the conflict. However, the collage of this area can serve as a powerful expression of various ideas. This area is deeply marked by the history of the conflict. While the Nicosia Master Plan has renovated the area, attempting to erase the remnants of the conflict from the buildings, this neighbourhood, located on the outskirts of the buffer zone, still bears traces of its past. Although the planning is situated within the post-division boundaries of the city, the fragments within the collage acknowledge these boundaries while also making subtle gestures. They are aware of the division and the city's current situation but refuse to accept the limitations imposed by these borders. They demonstrate the ability to transcend these boundaries effortlessly.⁵⁰

50 - From my research diary on 9 February 2023.

Unfortunately, I've never physically visited this particular area, and it seems unlikely I ever will. Nonetheless, I am thankful to Google Maps for enabling digital exploration, albeit with limitations. This area, situated on the fringe of a no-man's land, is marked by numerous barricades where streets meet the Buffer Zone. These barricades, now integral to the cityscape, resemble works of art, almost like a collage, yet they also symbolise the enduring stigma of conflict.

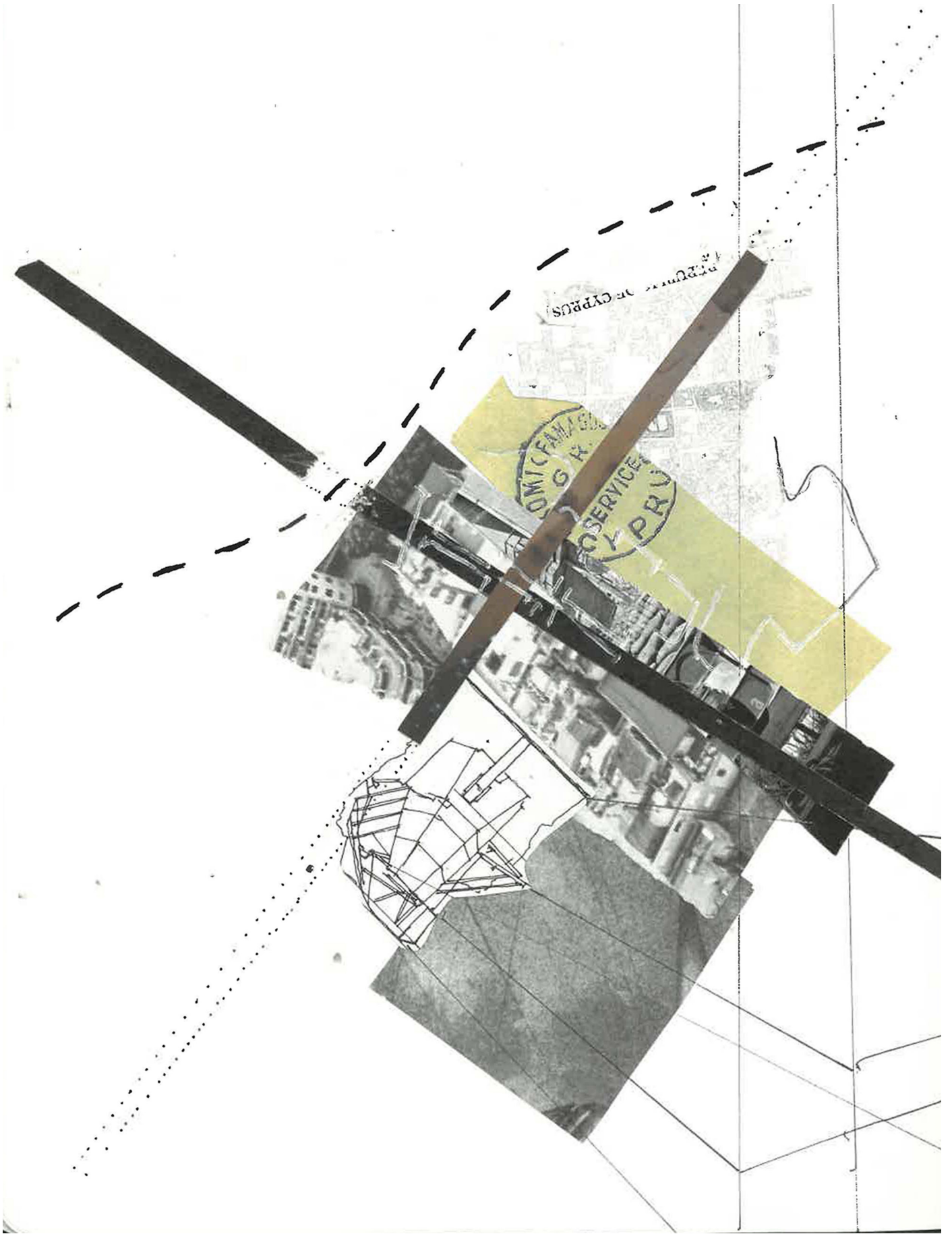
During my virtual tour, I discovered a neighbourhood that has been renovated, masking its authentic character behind seemingly immaculate buildings dotted with historic structures. Initially, I intended to capture the sense of soullessness I sensed in these new, yellow-adorned buildings.

However, at every intersection with the suburbs, I encountered an organic collage, a spontaneous creation emerging from conflict.

Thus, despite efforts to erase conflict's remnants, these organic collages stand as persistent reminders of recent history as long as division continues.

Inspired by these deep and critical reflections on the city, I embarked on my collage-making journey, seeking to understand the site's boundaries and imprints. The fragments I gathered, notably from the southern part of the region, may seem unfamiliar to others but are quite revealing to me. In this collage, it is the orientation of the fragments, rather than the specific items, that imbues it with meaning. Each fragment I chose—the Buffer Zone depicted as a bird's-eye view of the city, the dividing wall at the streets' intersection with this zone, a three-dimensional collage symbolising collision, a postal envelope with a Cyprus postmark mirroring the colour of the area's restored buildings, and a map fragment intersecting the city's limits—plays a role. The axes intersect again with the Buffer Zone, but a black axis seems to direct the other fragments, crossing the boundary line of division. This, perhaps, reflects my hope that, despite everything, the boundaries of this border hold the potential to be transcended by other limits.

49 Christina Pieri, "Selective Heritage Management in Divided Cities: Focusing on Nicosia's Walled City Centre" (Nottingham Trent University, 2017), 198.



5 - Collaging Chrysaliniotissa

Therefore, this alternative reading critically examines the limitations and principles of the Nicosia Master Plan. Although it functions as a historical conservation plan for the city's future and holds a critical position, the collaged boundaries within the Buffer Zone, aligned with the axes of the neighbourhood, inspire us to envision what could be done for the city. They challenge us to imagine possibilities beyond what is currently being undertaken.

According to the Nicosia Master Plan, the objective was to restore buildings in the Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa districts for residential and community purposes. Housing rehabilitation projects were implemented in both areas, and craft workshops were established as part of the restoration process.⁵¹ The NMP aimed to attract new residents to the old town by increasing the availability of housing within the city walls while simultaneously enhancing community facilities and open public spaces.⁵² As a result of the Chrysaliniotissa and Arabahmet projects, many dilapidated buildings in these areas were renovated for housing, small commercial enterprises, and cultural centres. Consequently, the restoration of decayed structures made a significant contribution to revitalising the two districts, increasing occupancy in vacant buildings, and rejuvenating disused neighbourhoods. However, it is important to note that this thesis does not seek to explore the process of regeneration or the urban significance of its outcomes. Instead, the research aims to understand the objectives of these projects and whether alternative ideas can be generated from a critical perspective through collage-making.

Nonetheless, a brief analysis of these projects indicates the importance of both areas in preserving Nicosia's heritage. Firstly, both projects are situated on the outskirts of the Buffer Zone and the Venetian walls, thus attracting attention and investment towards the dormant areas within Nicosia's walls. Secondly, the regeneration of the residential neighbourhood has the potential to revitalise the area and, if successful, influence the surrounding regions, expanding the boundaries of regeneration. Furthermore, it invigorates the active population. Encouraging a diverse range of uses and facilities in regenerated areas, such as workshops and other public-interest buildings, enhances their social, cultural, and economic value, appealing to a broader demographic. These characteristics collectively create a promising future for both neighbourhoods.

The collages of these neighbourhoods provide valuable insights into their individual potentials and give rise to profound inquiries. While the project primarily underscores the importance of

51 Esther Ruth Charlesworth, *Architects without Frontiers: War, Reconstruction and Design Responsibility* (Amsterdam ; London: Architectural, 2006), 92.

52 Agni Petridou, "A Bi-Communal Initiative to Change the Image of the City" (Nicosia, 2003).

preserving the existing fabric of these sites, the collages delve deeper into the possibilities offered by fragmented narratives. Both the Arapahmet and Chrysaliniotissa sites have been subject to similar analyses, resulting in parallel narratives. These locations have been significantly shaped by the conflicts that have defined recent history, thus becoming legacies of such turmoil. The collages also offer valuable perspectives on the intricate interplay between conflict, power dynamics, and collective aspirations in the context of urban regeneration and development. Within the collages, simple gestures symbolise the impact of conflict, leading to a proliferation of alternative dialogues among the fragments as one seeks to understand the historical context.

When considering the interpretation of these collages and acknowledging the region's provocative interests, it can be seen that the city government could potentially be manipulated as a political weapon if segregation in these regions persists. This scenario could transform the city into a battleground for power struggles between the two regions. However, from an alternative standpoint, both districts bear the imprints of their troubled history, and their location at the edge of the Buffer Zone presents an opportunity to foster a greater sense of the city's future. In this alternative unified future, the integration of these areas with respect to the Buffer Zone could serve the common interests of the city, reconciling their contested histories.

In conclusion, the collages of these neighbourhoods not only show their distinctive potential but also invite critical examination of their historical significance and their role in shaping the trajectory of the city. These collages serve as powerful tools to understand the complexities of urban dynamics, offering a platform to explore possibilities for reconciliation, unity, and regeneration in a city marked by its past conflicts.

The Buffer Zone

The Buffer Zone, initially established as a mutually agreed boundary between the adversarial communities during the Cyprus conflict in the early 1960s, later evolved into a definitive demarcation after the culmination of the 1974 war. This zone, occupying 10% of Nicosia, the capital city, and traversing the historic Walled City, falls under the control of the United Nations. Subsequent to its abandonment, the area has suffered from decay, with many buildings and infrastructures left in ruins. Recognising its vulnerability, extensive renovation efforts have been planned with the support of the UN, with the Buffer Zone earning recognition as one of the "Seven Most

Endangered Heritage Sites” by Europa Nostra.⁵³

Located at the heart of historic Nicosia, the Buffer Zone plays a pivotal role in urban development discourse, featuring prominently in many proposed city projects. Many planning strategies emphasise its potential as a unifying element in the divided city, facilitating the integration of the old city and fostering cooperation between the dichotomous communities. However, the necessity for mutual collaboration between the two sides, namely the Republic of Cyprus in the South and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the North, has engendered an array of bureaucratic impediments, constraining progress in the zone’s restoration endeavours. Despite these challenges, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the UN Peace Keeping Force have undertaken concerted initiatives to address the Buffer Zone’s predicaments and have proposed a strategy for the Buffer Zone.

The Buffer Zone’s strategic location, serving as both a physical boundary and a nexus between neighbourhoods, renders it indispensable for the city’s future development. Its current state of abandonment and ruin poses a potential threat to the city’s fabric and historical importance in the event of possible reunification. The preservation of the area is, therefore, critical to safeguarding the city’s heritage and collective memory.⁵⁴ The United Nations initiated a comprehensive planning process, considering the contributions made by the NMP in the past. The project’s central aim is to rejuvenate the buildings and infrastructures within the zone, preventing further degradation, and in a possible event of reunification, the project aims to retain the authenticity of the urban fabric by refraining from replacing lost and empty spaces with modern structures.⁵⁵ Strategic planning involves an extensive survey of existing structures, formulation of intervention strategies for critical edifices, and the development of an action plan based on meticulous findings. Although detailed documents and illustrations remain confidential due to prevailing political sensitivities, extant reports affirm the active advancement of the project.

In the collages, on the other hand, I explore the complexities and challenges of working in an abandoned zone. The collaged images I create serve as a visual representation of the difficulties faced in revitalising this neglected space left untouched for nearly half a century. The process of collage itself becomes a metaphor for the erasure of traces within this region, highlighting the gaps and uncertainties that are evident in the images.⁵⁶

53 Peter Bond, “Europa Nostra/ EIB Institute. The Seven Most Endangered Heritage Site. The Buffer Zone of the Historic Centre of Nicosia, Cyprus” (Luxembourg, 2013).

54 Bond.

55 Ibid.

56 - From my research diary on 15 February 2023.

I find myself deeply intrigued by the enigmatic Buffer Zone in Nicosia. It stands as a vivid representation of a moment frozen in time, a poignant reminder of 1974 when one of Nicosia’s vibrant streets came to a standstill. Despite its haunting ties to conflict, there’s something almost romantic about it, unlike man-made borders like those in the US-Mexico or Berlin. This unique zone delineates itself not through walls, but through the very spaces once cherished as homes and workplaces.

In the heart of Nicosia, this area strikes me as particularly delicate and sensitive. It’s a shared boundary where the North and the South coexist along a single street, creating a complex management challenge. Per UN regulations, access to this zone is restricted.

During my visit, all I could see were trees sprouting from the zone, symbols of a space deserted and reclaimed by nature.

Reflecting on this, I’m drawn to the echoes of forgotten traces, textures, and memories. The porous nature of this boundary, patched with temporary materials, revealed itself to me. This insight inspired the beginning of my collage. Faced with a lack of clear maps or projects of the area, I wondered what would emerge if I stripped back the layers of disappearance and the materials filling the gaps.

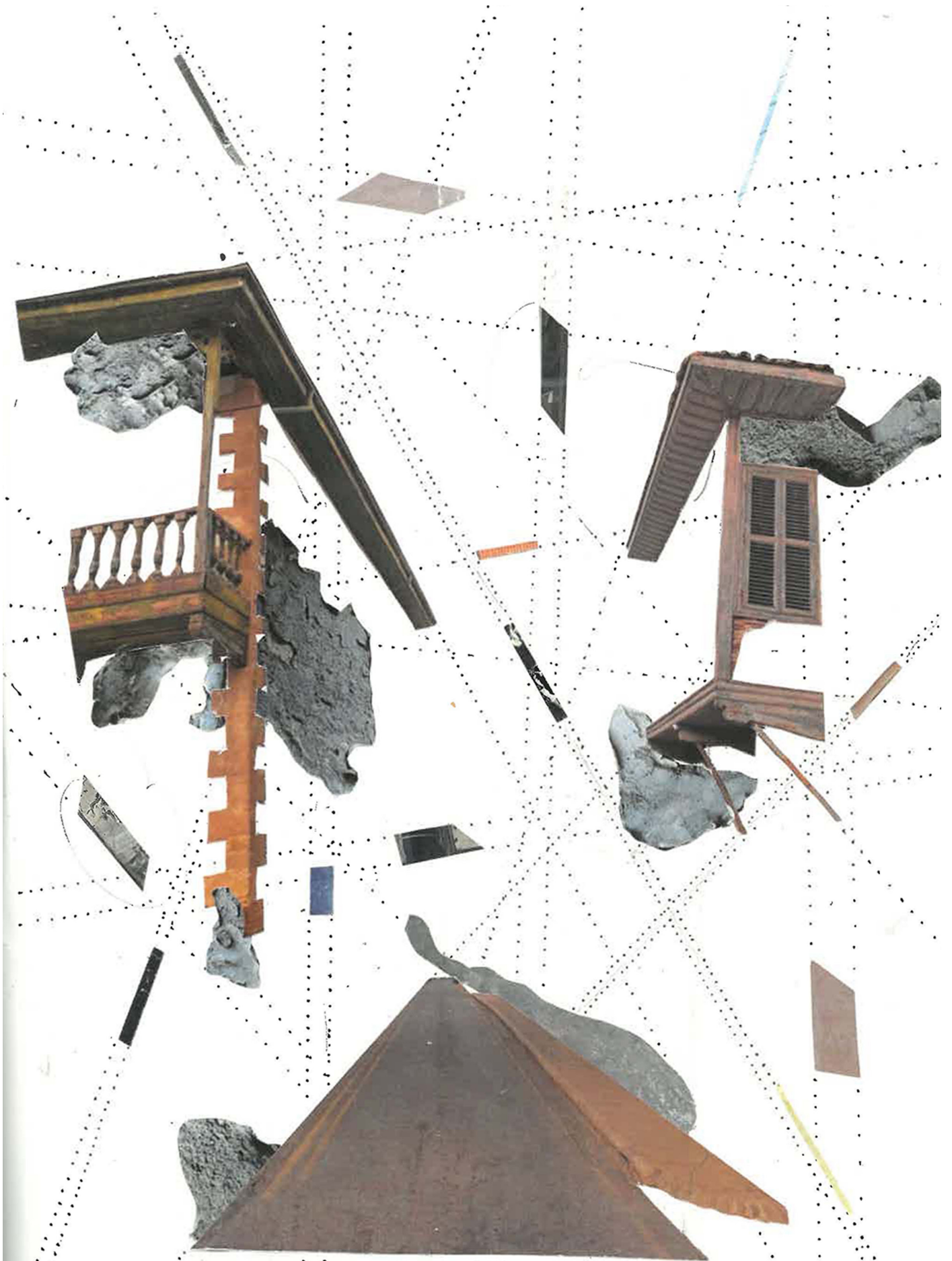
Starting with a few photographs provided by the UN, I discovered a street lined with elongated facades and bay windows. As I removed the contested textures, the buildings were reduced to skeletal outlines, and their understanding transformed into emptiness.

Yet, I couldn’t ignore that this void is “the most evident reminder of the city’s conflicted history.” Instead of erasing these poignant marks, I incorporated textures into the collage that hint at their presence.

The most striking elements were the flying fragments, each with its own story—a piece of a window, a chunk of a wall, or a random object floating in the composition.

Their flight is telling, suggesting a search to reclaim their original place or to land on new structures, redefining boundaries. They seem to be seeking a place of belonging, either to reconnect with the past or to forge a new identity.

In the midst of creating the collage, I am immersed in contemplation and reflection. This artistic endeavour evolves into a medium through which I connect with the rich tapestry of history and humanity. The Buffer Zone, once veiled in the textures of conflict, now reveals its secrets, leaving me pondering the hidden narratives within its confines.



6 - Collaging the Buffer Zone I

While these compositions feature recognisable structures, such as buildings, houses, and workplaces, they fail to provide a comprehensive understanding of life within the area. The struggle to grasp the importance of the place emerges, making the UN's decision to protect this zone crucial. However, the primary concern that arises in my collages is what exactly the preservation efforts will safeguard. The gaps present within the collaged image not only denote the architectural elements that have succumbed to erosion or demolition over time but also symbolise the intangible aspects encompassing the values, memories, and identity that have dissipated within the city subsequent to its abandonment.

The gaps in the buildings used to create the 'Buffer Zone' have been filled with discarded materials. The collages, on the other hand, can be interpreted as images of potential gaps within the zone while simultaneously capturing the gestures of the fragments that fill these voids. Upon removing these materials, indistinguishable gaps are left behind, prompting the collage to inquire about these voids through its gestures. Thus, it can be argued that even if the UN's conservation decisions are adhered to, it seems that the remains left behind by these fragments can only be shaped by the perspectives and perceptions of their rightful owners.⁵⁷ [6-7]

*Eleftheria Square*⁵⁸

Unlike previous projects, the Eleftheria Project was not part of the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP) or New Vision projects. In contrast, the focus of the Eleftheria Square revitalisation project differs from prior initiatives. However, due to it marked the first step toward the city's future and revitalisation in the 21st century, continuing the vision set forth by the NMP and New Vision, it is important to understand it. The area shows no signs of conflict, as it is undergoing regeneration to create a public open space linking the historic core to the rest of the city. However, it is important to understand the future plans of the city.

Eleftheria Square holds a significant place in the history of Nicosia as it marked the city's expansion beyond the historic city walls following a decision by the British administration on the island. In 1950, a causeway was constructed in this area to shift the trade route from the northernmost Kyrenia Gate of

58 The realisation of this project did not materialise under the framework of the Nicosia Master Plan (NMP). Nevertheless, the considerably stronger economic position of the Republic of Cyprus in comparison to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and its status as an independent state enables the uninterrupted progression of the city's renovation endeavours within its own financial allocation, specifically focusing on the southern region of Nicosia. Understanding this project also shows the new visions for Nicosia, outlining future urban planning strategies.

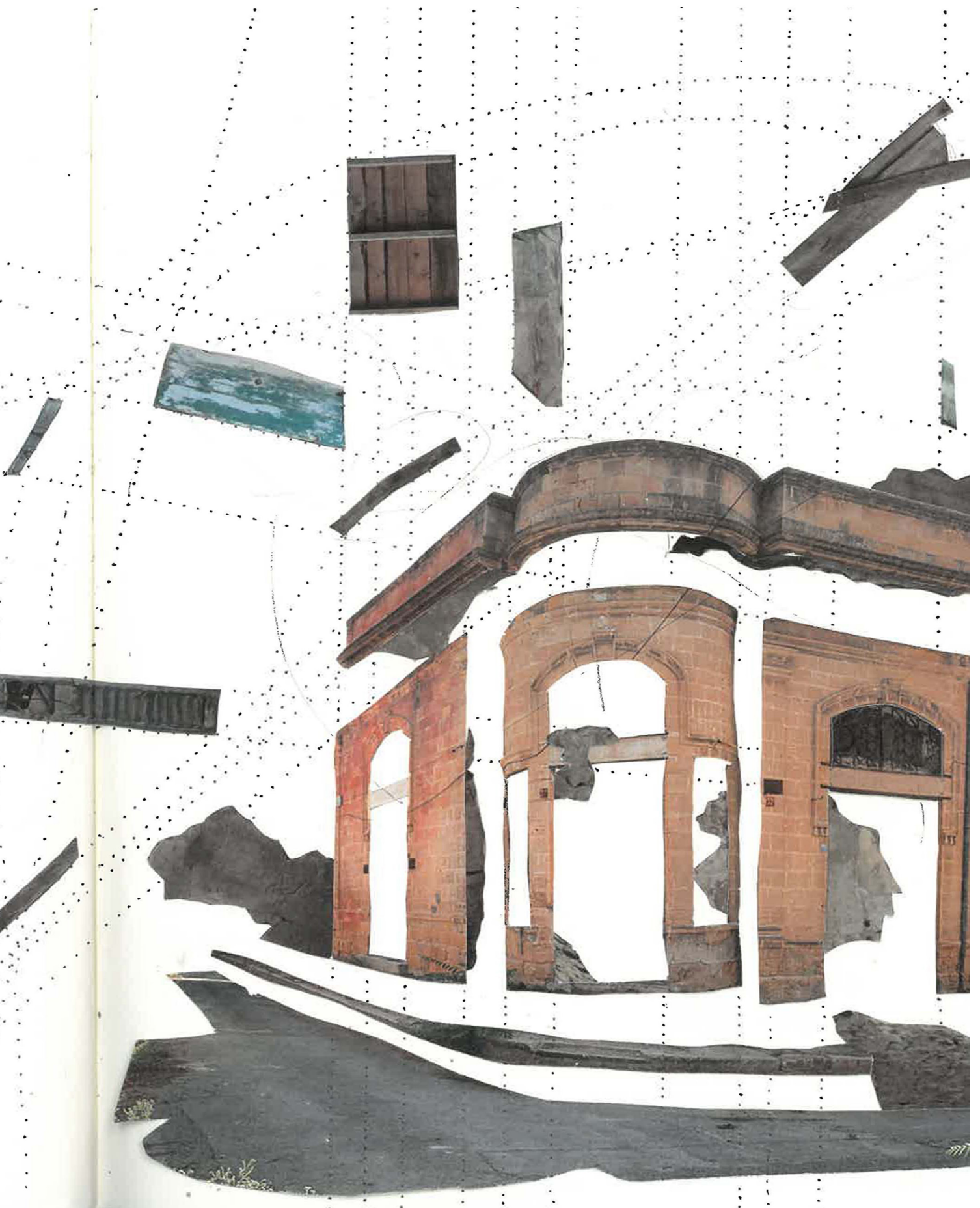
57 - From my research diary on 18 February 2023.

In my recent work, I focused on an image frequently associated with the Buffer Zone: a building elegantly situated at a street corner, where its curved lines seamlessly blend with the intersecting roads. This process echoed my previous collages; I began by removing the building's distinct marks, reducing it to a mere shadow of its original form. Then, I added some textures, but its original charm seemed to diminish. However, a transformative moment occurred when I adorned it with scars—suddenly, it stood as a poignant memorial.

This time, I aimed to emphasise the uniqueness of each fragment, as if they were reaching out to connect through faint traces. A persistent question lingered: were these fragments attempting to bridge the gaps, reinforce the border, or revive this neglected structure?

Interestingly, the Buffer Zone's state of 'in-betweenness' and its deserted nature have led my collages to move beyond the direct political conflict or provocation between the city's two communities. Yet, this doesn't mean that my work lacks depth or stimulation. Rather, it serves as a platform for questioning and, perhaps, rebelling against the erasure, unrecognizability, and abandonment that shroud this mysterious space.

The collage thus gains its own voice—a voice that resonates with the echoes of a place frozen in time, where memories and histories intersect. Each fragment carries a story waiting to be unravelled, inviting the viewer to engage with the complexities of conflict and the enduring impact of the past.



7 - Collaging the Buffer Zone II

the Venetian Walls to the outskirts of the city, starting from the same Kyrenia Gate and following Ledra Street. This move also defined the line of growth outside the city walls in the South. Initially built as a wooden structure over a moat by the British, this passage was later expanded and named Metaksas Square. In 1975, through a public vote, it was renamed Eleftheria, meaning Freedom.

This square established a new boundary for South Nicosia, leading to changes within the Walled City. The historic city faced increasing congestion, causing affluent families to relocate to new areas, while the Walled City became a concentration point for lower-income families, the elderly, and migrants. As such, Eleftheria Square served as an intermediary zone between the emerging identity of the city and its old fabric, bridging the gap between the old and new parts of the city. Even today, it holds a crucial position, particularly as one end of the crossing point at Ledra Street. Travelling north along the shopping line, passing through the Ledra crossing point, and following the pedestrianised Ledra Street, one is greeted by the view of Eleftheria Square. It remains a focal point for South Nicosia and hosts political rallies, commercials, sports competitions, important events, and celebrations.

In 2005, the Municipality of Nicosia initiated an architectural competition to redesign Eleftheria Square and its surroundings. Funded by the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus, the aim was to enhance the square's functionality and aesthetic image, prioritising pedestrians and providing space for relaxation, social gatherings, and public events, and promoting the Medieval Walls. The first prize was awarded to Zaha Hadid Architects, comprising Zaha Hadid, Christos Passas from South Cyprus, and Saffet Bekiroglu from North Cyprus.

The jury's report praised the proposal for its originality, contemporary style, and successful creation of a seamless flow between the areas inside and outside the old city. The design was described as a sculpture, establishing a central space that would become a reference point for the city. ZHA's project for Eleftheria Square bore the signature fluid lines often associated with Zaha Hadid. These lines artfully navigated the historic city walls and found their own expression in the moat section, creating a new urban landscape for the city. On the other hand, the Eleftheria Project ushered in a transformative yet challenging phase for the city. Spanning over 15 years, the project encountered funding issues and difficulty in translating design language into real life, and resulted in numerous transportation obstacles, leaving the local population dissatisfied. Nevertheless, urban planners and decision-makers rallied behind the project. Then-President Nicos Anastasiades hailed Eleftheria Square as "a real jewel, which connects old Nicosia with new

61 - From my research diary on 13 February 2023.

I recently examined ZHA's project in Nicosia, which has left an indelible mark on the city. Through online exploration, notably on Google Maps, I was struck by the project's dramatic visual impact, especially prominent at the southern end of the city. It stands out as a distinct entity, separate from its urban surroundings. Anyone familiar with architecture could recognise this as Zaha Hadid's design. Yet, I found myself questioning whether this project truly complements Nicosia's rich historical tapestry.

After researching Nicosia's history, I pondered if the selected project harmonises with the city's architectural identity. It does not have to, but...If I relocate the project to a different area, probably, it will be fit with the new site as well. This led me to speculate if the choice was driven by a desire to showcase the city's modernity, a decision that has significant implications for Nicosia's character.

During a visit to North Nicosia, I saw Tower 25, designed by Jean Nouvel, near Eleftheria Square from behind the border. Although I couldn't view Eleftheria Square directly, its influence was palpable. This observation made me consider the political significance that might underlie the current project, disguised as urban renewal. The towering structures rising from the South contrast sharply with the appearance of the North, offering a divergent image of Nicosia to those approaching from the North, it seems like symbolising power and progress.

While working on this collage, I realised the project's extensive use of Hadid's fluid lines, symbolising her authority within the city. I included a cross-section along the axes in my collage, extending just beyond the intersection with the Buffer Zone. This design choice reflects the sense of 'wonder' experienced when viewing the project from the north, capturing the full extent of its impact on the city's landscape.

Nicosia in a modern way",⁵⁹ symbolising the desired future of the city. A promotional video by the Nicosia Municipality emphasised that the square would become "a distinctive image for the city".⁶⁰

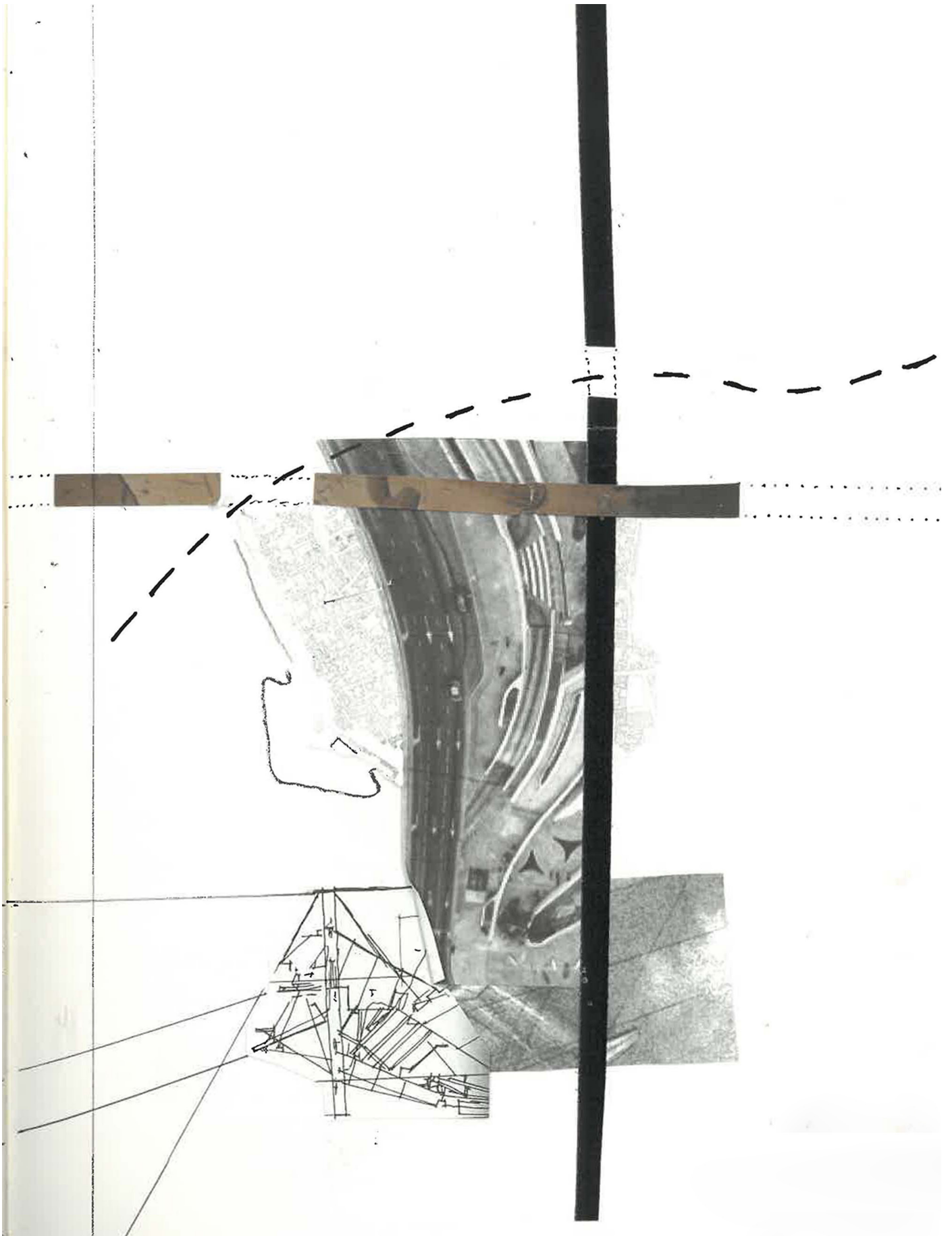
The creation of a collage depicting Zaha Hadid Architects' project in Nicosia has profoundly influenced my perception of this project. ZHA's design, characterised by its fluid lines, has transformed the conventional landscape of Nicosia, imbuing a section of the city with a new identity. This transformation aligns with the vision of urban planners and decision-makers, particularly in light of Nicosia's integration into the European Union. However, the collaged image has added an intriguing layer of provocation, raising questions about the project's underlying intentions.⁶¹

The project area spans a significant part of the city, beginning from Kyrenia Gate in the north, cutting through the Buffer Zone at Ledra Crossing Point, and extending along Ledra Street. With the project's realisation, this area has witnessed a surge in activity and urban development, including high-rise buildings. This growth prompts reflections on urban regeneration as a symbol of strength, particularly considering the limited resources and restricted access in the North. For locals and tourists, traversing this route to reach the Buffer Zone highlights the evolving urban landscape.

During the collage-making process, my focus shifted towards the project's relationship with the city. While the collage depicts ZHA's signature contours, it also questions their connection to the city's Buffer Zone and conflicted history. This interpretation emerged from the collage-making itself, leading to a critical examination not just of the project's contributions to the city, but also what it fails to address. Nicosia, with its divided and contested past, cannot be fully understood without acknowledging its scars. By portraying Hadid's fluid lines extending from Eleftheria Square towards the border, the collage confronts these new urban elements with the Buffer Zone's divisive presence, questioning their disconnected relationship.[8]

59 Antigoni Pitta, "Eleftheria Square a 'Reference Point' for the Whole of Cyprus Says President", *CyprusMail*, March 22, 2021, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/03/22/eleftheria-square-a-reference-point-for-the-whole-of-cyprus-says-president/>.

60 Nicosia Municipality, *Cyprus: Nicosia Inaugurates Eleftheria Square after EU-Funded Facelift* (Cyprus: European Commission in Cyprus, 2022).



8 - Collaging Eleftheria Square

(Re)perceiving the Peace-making operations through collage

This chapter analysed projects developed during the peace-making process in Nicosia to understand the city's envisioned future. Initiated as collaborative efforts, these projects highlighted the potential for cooperation between communities living in parallel realities. The analysis primarily focused on initiatives like the Nicosia Master Plan and the New Vision. Despite their focus on urban revitalisation and reconciliation, none of these projects has fully achieved the overarching goal of reuniting Nicosia. While they each aimed at revitalising the city, restoring its lost fabric and identity following periods of conflict, their impact has been confined to their respective parts of the city, falling short of the collective aspiration for a united future.

In this chapter, an analysis of collages created during this project provides an alternative perspective to understand the involved initiatives. The emphasis on collage in my research goes beyond merely demonstrating my skills as a collagist; it has been crucial in amplifying my voice and highlighting my identity as a researcher. The development of this series of collages has become a valuable medium, enabling me to more effectively articulate my inquiries and interpretations of Nicosia. Consequently, by positioning myself as a researcher within this collage-based study, I have been able to explore the identity, culture, history, texture, and potential of the city in a single composition through the fragments of the city. Thus, each series in this collection of collages served a dual purpose: they not only manifested the agency of the individual fragments but also demonstrated my own agency, both as an observer and as an urban researcher.

The collage series has also enabled me to re-perceive the peace-making projects, offering a renewed understanding of the city. This collage experiment was transformative, moving beyond mere artistic representation to engage deeply with the city's identity, challenges, and future expectations. The process of assembling and reassembling the city's fragments in my collage series allowed me to see beyond the physical structures, uncovering the underlying tensions and potentialities within the urban landscape. Furthermore, the collages shed light on the potential of working with both known and unseen aspects of the city. Despite physical barriers, the collage provided the freedom to explore and discuss areas of the city that were not physically accessible to me. This exploration has led to critical reflections on urban division and the potential for reimagining the city's spaces.

Each image in this collage series offered critical interpretations and raises new questions about the city, stemming from these projects. A recurring theme was the impact of the Buffer Zone on urban development initiatives in Nicosia. The collages provided alternative perspectives on the Buffer Zone, linking it to the subject matter of each fragment. As mentioned above, while

the overarching goal of these projects was to promote a united future for Nicosia and present a positive vision, none have fully realised this ambition. The collages indicated the Buffer Zone as a significant impediment to achieving this objective.

This challenge was particularly highlighted in the collages focusing on the Selimiye and Omeriye twin development projects. The creation of the Buffer Zone, dividing these projects' locations into two distinct areas, resulted in parallel developments on each side of the city. It became apparent through the process of collage-making that the Buffer Zone itself posed the primary obstacle for both projects. As noted in my collage diary during the creation of the Selimiye project, "Each line in my sketches seems to navigate towards the Buffer Zone, symbolising the area's critical role in the city's future, especially if a united Nicosia is possible".⁶² Similarly, while working on the Omeriye project, I observed, "This area, yearning for unity, finds itself severed by the Buffer Zone and constrained by other axes of the city".⁶³

The collage-making process also highlighted the critical significance of these areas for the future of Nicosia. For the twin projects of the Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa neighbourhoods, collages showed that they were situated at the forefront of the Buffer Zone, occupying a strategic and sensitive position in the city's landscape. Following division, they transformed into refugee areas, adding layers of complexity to their social and urban fabric. The renovation efforts in these neighbourhoods were thus interpreted not only as urban renewal projects but also as attempts to reshape their public image.

Creating collages for these neighbourhoods created a range of thought-provoking reflections. In my diary, I noted my contemplations about the influence of external factors on these renovations:

*I might be overthinking it, but I couldn't help but ponder whether the space's initial renovation was influenced by the UN's presence and its interactions with the Greek Cypriots. The axes' deliberate orientation, overlooking the Buffer Zone and Greek territory, led me to contemplate this possibility. Engaging in this collage-making process has deepened my understanding that this place could evolve into a symbol of strength, reflecting the complex dynamics embedded within its fragments.*⁶⁴

Furthermore, the collages focusing on the Buffer Zone prompted inquiries into the enigmatic nature of Nicosia's non-humanized spaces. The construction of these collage sequences themselves reflects this sense of

62 From my research diary on 2 February 2023.

63 From my research diary on 4 February 2023.

64 From my research diary on 9 February 2023.

mystery. I employed dashed and dotted lines to represent the Buffer Zone, symbolising its indeterminate state. Interestingly, these collages were created by subtracting fragments rather than adding them, which accentuates the concept of the unknown. This approach is detailed in my diary:

As I removed the contested textures, the buildings were reduced to skeletal outlines, and their understanding transformed into emptiness. Yet, I couldn't ignore that this void is "the most evident reminder of the city's conflicted history." Instead of erasing these poignant marks, I incorporated textures into the collage that hint at their presence...The most striking elements were the flying fragments, each with its own story—a piece of a window, a chunk of a wall, or a random object floating in the composition. Their flight is telling, suggesting a search to reclaim their original place or to land on new structures, redefining boundaries. They seem to be seeking a place of belonging, either to reconnect with the past or to forge a new identity.⁶⁵

In the final collage of this section, an environment of critique and inquiry was fostered. The Eleftheria Square project, a prominent endeavour funded by the Republic of Cyprus and designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, was intended to shape the city's image. However, the collage-making process cast a questioning light on this representation of the city. The juxtaposition of Hadid's distinctive design lines with the existing urban texture of the city introduced an unintended critical perspective. Within the collage, this project was contrasted against the dashed line symbolizing the Buffer Zone, drawing a stark comparison between the textures of North and South Nicosia and highlighting the modernist lines extending towards the North. This aspect of the collage underscored the developmental disparities between the two parts of the city, interpreting them through a political lens. As I noted my diary:

During a visit to North Nicosia, I saw Tower 25, designed by Jean Nouvel, near Eleftheria Square from behind the border. Although I couldn't view Eleftheria Square directly, its influence was palpable. This observation made me consider the political significance that might underlie the current project, disguised as urban renewal. The towering structures rising from the South contrast sharply with the appearance of the North, offering a divergent image of Nicosia to those approaching from the North, it seems like symbolising power and progress...While working on this collage, I realised the project's extensive use of Hadid's fluid lines, symbolising her authority within the city. I included a cross-section along the

65 From my research diary on 15 February 2023.

*axes in my collage, extending just beyond the intersection with the Buffer Zone. This design choice reflects the sense of 'wonder' experienced when viewing the project from the north, capturing the full extent of its impact on the city's landscape.*⁶⁶

Each project analysed in this chapter envisioned an urban future for Nicosia that is united and free from division, as well as political and ethnic divisions. However, the collage series based on these projects suggested that such aspirations cannot be achieved without acknowledging and accepting the realities of differences and division. On one hand, the collages provoke direct contemplation of these issues. On the other hand, they do not imply that collage is unsuitable for political discourse. Instead, collage serves as a method that fosters a peaceful and reflective space, encouraging discussions and reminding us of the city's diverse values, both new and old.

In this sequence of collages, collage inherently recognises limitations but also offers the freedom to work creatively within and beyond these limits. Each collage set its own boundaries, delineating traces and axes of the city. While many of these traces represent the city's limitations, each collage transcended these boundaries, developing unique interpretations of the city. This process highlighted the potential of collage as a holistic and consciousness-raising tool in a city marked by conflict. As I reflected in my diary:

*The axes intersect again with the Buffer Zone, but a black axis seems to direct the other fragments, crossing the boundary line of division. This, perhaps, reflects my hope that, despite everything, the boundaries of this border hold the potential to be transcended by other limits.*⁶⁷

The practice of collage-making in this chapter has transformed me into an active agent, allowing me to fully embrace and use my dual identity as a researcher and collagist for the first time. This process has facilitated the generation of my inquiries about the city and enabled me to develop interpretations based on these inquiries. Therefore, the interrelationship between the collage fragments and their connection with my own perspectives and ideas about the city have profoundly shaped my understanding of collage. This, in turn, has opened new potentialities within the medium of collage.

As I articulated in my diary, the interpretation of collage lies not just in the fragments themselves, but in their integration into a cohesive whole that informs my perception. This approach has positioned me as a researcher within this chapter.

66 From my research diary on 13 February 2023.

67 From my research diary on 9 February 2023.

In defining the boundaries of this unique urban space, which is central yet paradoxically confined, I initially grappled with selecting specific fragments. However, I soon realised that the true importance lies not in the individual pieces but in depicting the overall enforced fragmentation and the resulting loss of the area's historic character. It became clear that the significance of collage-making is in engaging with the fragments intuitively, beyond their mere visual aspects. This space, emblematic of both constraints and hope, seems to mirror the aspiration for a unified Nicosia, unburdened by political divisions and awaiting the removal of barriers that impede its unity.⁶⁸

The collages created in this section also highlighted the intriguing possibility of engaging with both familiar and unexplored aspects of Nicosia. While I had the opportunity to visit North Nicosia, access to South Nicosia and the Buffer Zone was limited for me. However, this constraint did not hinder my exploration of projects in the southern part of the city. Similar to Woods' approach in Sarajevo, where he conceptualised a project about the city without having physically seen it, collage-making empowered me to imagine and articulate narratives about these unvisited areas. This approach is exemplified in the collage I made for the Chrysaliniotissa neighbourhood in South Nicosia, a place I have never physically experienced. As noted during the creation of this collage:

Unfortunately, I have never physically visited this particular area, and it seems unlikely I ever will. Nonetheless, I am thankful to Google Maps for enabling digital exploration, albeit with limitations. This area, situated on the fringe of a no-man's land, is marked by numerous barricades where streets meet the Buffer Zone...During my virtual tour, I discovered a neighbourhood that has been renovated, masking its authentic character behind seemingly immaculate buildings dotted with historic structures... Inspired by these deep and critical reflections on the city, I embarked on my collage-making journey, seeking to understand the site's boundaries and imprints... The fragments I gathered, notably from the southern part of the region, may seem unfamiliar to others but are quite revealing to me. In this collage, it is the orientation of the fragments, rather than the specific items, that imbues it with meaning... This, perhaps, reflects my hope that, despite everything, the boundaries of this border hold the potential to be transcended by other limits.⁶⁹

68 From my research diary on 2 February 2023.

69 From my research diary on 9 February 2023.

As a result, while exploring the envisioned future for Nicosia in this chapter, new questions about the city have emerged alongside new potentials for collage as a medium. Although urban projects in Nicosia are theoretically effective, their practical implementation faces constraints due to the realities of the city's division. These limitations have hindered their success. However, in the process of creating collages, I realised that these limitations do not constrain the narrative of the collage. Instead, they transform into integral fragments within the collage. The city's conflicted history, recent past, ongoing disputes, and future aspirations all converge within the collage, each represented as a fragment of the broader city narrative. Thus, the collage has provided a platform for discussing Nicosia from diverse perspectives, highlighting the potential of collage as a tool in exploring contested urban spaces. This approach aligns with the principles outlined in Rowe and Koetter's *Collage City*.⁷⁰

Another key focus of this chapter is the evolution of the language of collage-making. The series of collages not only underscores my identity as a researcher engaging with the medium but has also facilitated the development of my unique collage language as a collagist. This approach is akin to the method used in Couta's 'Urban Legend I' collage, analysed at the beginning of this chapter. My collages, influenced by my experiences in Nicosia, feature limits represented through dashed and dotted lines. These lines serve not as barriers but as markers of location, reflecting the realities of urban segregation while also pointing towards latent potentialities. The Buffer Zone, typically perceived as an inaccessible space, is reimaged in my collages as a realm of proliferating ideas. The dotted lines, representing the unknown, do not signify emptiness but rather offer a canvas for envisioning the city's possibilities. This realisation shapes the ensuing section, which delves into specific areas within the collage, exploring their significance and potential narratives.

70 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978).

Chapter 6

The Buffer Zone Furniture Store

Spatial collages

This chapter begins with a question I introduced at the start of the thesis;

How can collage provide an alternative approach to working with contested spaces?

Addressing this question marks the culmination of my practice-based research. The inquiry into collage in the previous chapters opens up an examination here of my role as both a researcher and collagist within the framework of collage-based creative practice.

This chapter focuses on the Buffer Zone of the divided city, exploring how collage can offer an effective approach to this space. In Nicosia, a number of considerations, including the history of the city, the history of its conflict, its texture, its socio-political and economic circumstances, and ongoing efforts towards unification, necessitate careful examination before engaging in any work. Collage, in this context, has emerged as a potential tool for comprehensively addressing these multifaceted aspects while working within the contested spaces of Nicosia. Despite the continued presence of the Buffer Zone, which remains a formidable obstacle in peace-making efforts for Nicosia, the practice of collage offers an alternative perspective for engagement with and a commentary upon the city.

The previous chapter provided an in-depth analysis of projects that preceded the peace process in Nicosia. These initiatives were started as responses to the coexistence of two distinct communities within the same city. Initially, the focus was on solving this problem. After its successful resolution, efforts evolved into what became known as urban revitalisation projects. While these efforts were launched to reclaim the city's lost fabric and identity, and to ensure its resilience for a potential united future, they ultimately manifested as isolated interventions within the urban fabric for each side of the city. However, none of them achieved their ultimate goal of promoting 'peacebuilding and a united future'.

A primary factor contributing to the inefficiency of these projects was the Buffer Zone. This fact is illustrated by the collages created in the previous chapter, which examine the research from an alternative perspective. These collages, centred on the projects planned for Nicosia, scrutinised the effects of this division. They critiqued the projects for their oversight of the reality of the city being divided, casting a critical light on the interventions. In doing so, the collages underscored the city's constraints and asserted that a more imaginative perspective on its future is not only conceivable but imperative. Each of the fragments in the collage conflicts with the reality of the contested spaces of Nicosia but, unlike the projects, it does not pay heed to restrictions imposed. In other words, the collages echo the possibility of an alternative way of thinking in this problematic environment.

Drawing from the inquiries raised by the collages, it is evident that addressing the divided and contested spaces of the city remains relevant to realising a unified Nicosia as the desired future. Nevertheless, the prevailing theme in the executed projects thus far has been to present a revitalised Nicosia for the city in a depoliticised context. Each project was executed with division in mind but with an oversight of its actualities. Conversely, the collages, through their fragments, boldly assert that true non-politicality is implausible. They indicate that, for a united future to be envisaged, this must be acknowledged. It is nevertheless posited that a proposal can be advanced under these conditions, constrained yet unyielding.

Collage is proposed in this thesis as a ground for engaging with contested spaces. This recognises the many limitations, be they political, economic, or social, inherent in the divided city of Nicosia, acknowledging them as intrinsic realities of working in contested spaces. Yet, the collage approach extends an alternative reality within the world created. This alternative reality mirrors Nicosia's actuality but resides within its alternative space. As Lefebvre argues, the success of any revolution depends on creating its own space.¹ A collage approach, which emphasises the active role of spatial dimensions, rather than perceiving them solely as a consequence, resonates with Deleuze's rhizome theory, Soja's third space, and Woods' concept of injection, as discussed in Part I. This chapter attempts an alternative urban narrative rooted in the political, social, and economic limitations of the city, through the practice of collage.

Research that concurrently examines the interplay of political and spatial dynamics is relatively rare, a gap particularly evident in contexts like Nicosia. In such cities, where conflicts persist, and historical resolution remains elusive, the intricate relationship between political factors and spatial arrangements is often overlooked. This can be attributed to the complications arising from

1 H. Lefebvre, "The Production of Space", *The Production of Space*, 1991.

the nature of the division. Focusing on the divided city of Nicosia, this study acknowledges the challenges associated with comprehending, analysing, and working with highly problematic areas of the city, especially the no man's zone. The Buffer Zone allows for crossing between both sides of the city, but disregards spatial considerations due to the nature of remaining contested. Photography is strictly prohibited, and existing maps have not been updated since the "reconstruction" conducted by the armies of both sides and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force. Therefore, the collage-making process of this chapter deliberately focuses on this zone where these uncertainties abound, to create an 'alternative space' of collage.

This chapter synthesises insights and findings from Part II of this research, which examined Nicosia's history, conflict, urban fabric, socio-political and economic dynamics, and efforts towards peace and unification. This synthesis lays the groundwork for an experimental spatial practice of collage-making: a central focus of this chapter. Through collage, I attempt to navigate the intricate interplay of these multifaceted dimensions within the Buffer Zone - an alternative space envisioned as an area of coexistence for the two communities. This exploration leads to a deeper understanding of the idea of alternative space and its realisation through collage. The chapter then presents collage work that illustrates the potential existence of alternative space within Nicosia. This body of work consolidates previous methodologies and incorporates further approaches strategically employed to navigate the inherent limitations of the Buffer Zone. The process underscores the transformative potential of collage-making within this contested zone, ultimately conceptualised as a symbolic "furniture store" of the divided city.

In this chapter, the collage-making process is shaped by my predispositions, imagination, and reflections. This approach differs from previous chapters. Here, my interpretations and diary entries, previously secondary elements on the page margins, take centre stage. The collage itself reflects this shift, embodying my perspective as its core purpose. As a result, the chapter concludes with my viewpoint as a collagist-researcher. This represents one among many diverse perspectives, offering an alternative vision for the divided city of Nicosia.

The Buffer Zone as an Alternative Space

Rethinking Nicosia's Buffer Zone as a transformed space for alternatives

This practice-based research analyses Nicosia to test the potential of collage in contested spaces, developing narratives through the history of conflict, the contested fabric of the city, and the peace process in the city through collage to see how the city's contested spaces can be interpreted through an alternative medium. To this end, I analysed the division of Nicosia and Cyprus contextually and historically, predominantly from a spatial perspective. This perspective sheds light on the dominant narratives and practices that produced dominant conceptualisations and perceptions of Nicosia's Buffer Zone. Analysing the city's contested past from a fragmentary perspective, it has transformed the dominant narratives, discontinuities, deviations, and struggles for power and control in the formation of this zone into a narrative. When explaining from a collagist perspective, Nicosia's Buffer Zone, contrary to popular perception, is neither 'formed' nor 'unchanging' but rather emerged as a boundary stuck in time and awaiting the resolution of the Cyprus Problem. All narratives of the reunification of Nicosia and the achievement of peace on the island coincide with this area and invite us to engage with the Buffer Zone as a dynamic social structure with multiple spatial, social, and political functions.

Throughout the years, when a solution was sought but remained elusive, Nicosia's Buffer Zone has become a symbol that is emotionally charged for Cypriots and carries a variety of meanings for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It represents the fragmentation of the city. It is the embodiment of conflict and the focus of the collective memory of past traumas with the fragments of conflict. It is the most tangible realisation of the limits of the divided city. It is a 'border of the countries,' the 'gap' of the city, and 'an open scar of the conflict.' Its constant presence supports the official historical narratives on both sides of the division and validates them for the future. It is a dehumanised and militarised space created during and by the conflict. It is an obstacle to a united future. While transitions, regulations, and commercial policies are in place, the territory is a boundary to them. But it is also a space that connects these two sides. According to the NMP, it is a 'glueing' space, the common heritage of Cypriots and the heart of the city.²

The Buffer Zone, on the other hand, has also become an alternative space where the political conflicts of both communities can be put aside, and peace can be discussed.³ All the deliberations about the city's future have

2 Agni Petridou, "A Bi-Communal Initiative to Change the Image of the City" (Nicosia, 2003).; Nicosia Master Plan, "New Vision for the Core of Nicosia Final Report" (Nicosia, n.d.).

3 Zinovia Foka, "The Space In-Between: Tracing Transformative Process in Nicosia's Buffer Zone" (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 2019).

taken place at the Ledra Place Hotel in the Buffer Zone; once a famous and splendid hotel, now a UN military barracks and checkpoint, still bearing the scars of conflicts. Despite its contested past, this area has become the most vital point of contact on the island while simultaneously being regarded as a politically, ideologically, and culturally 'neutral' space for both communities.⁴

Adjacent to the Ledra Palace, at the outskirts of the historic centre, stands the Home for Cooperation.⁵ Established in 2011 by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, a bi-communal Cyprus-based non-governmental organisation, this institution has become a primary meeting place for peacebuilding, social change, and international cooperation, harnessing the transformative power of arts and culture. The Home for Cooperation also plays host to various cultural and artistic events, including film screenings, theatre performances, lectures in Greek and Turkish, art exhibitions, concerts, and presentations by scholars from both sides and abroad. Furthermore, the program supports projects focused on historical research and peace promotion, a collaborative effort by civil society organisations and individuals. In other words, it continues to exist in Nicosia as an institution that strives for coexistence and unity on the edge of the Buffer Zone.

The Buffer Zone has also been employed as a site for activism. In 2011, it witnessed the realisation of the UNCOVERED project, which initially started as an art project but later evolved into activism aimed at 'protesting and raising awareness about the problems of the global economic and political system in the city'.⁶ The project, known as the Occupy Buffer Zone, sought to draw attention to the intricate situation of the city and its inhabitants by aiming to occupy what is already occupied through the artworks and activities of the artists, all while presenting the city's situation with a touch of irony. Despite facing some limitations due to its situation in Nicosia's Buffer Zone and the nature of political limitations,⁷ the project played an important role in

4 Basak Senova, "Occupying the Occupied: Perception of Occupation and Control in Cyprus", Ibraaz, 2012.

5 For more information about the Home for Cooperation and its activities, see <https://www.home4cooperation.info> (last accessed May 20, 2023).

6 Senova, "Occupying the Occupied: Perception of Occupation and Control in Cyprus".

7 According to Senova, during the preparation for the UNCOVERED exhibition in September 2011, which took place 'under the auspices of the UN,' some limitations were encountered due to the UN's actions. Specifically, a day before the exhibition's opening, UN executives visited and censored Erhan Öze's work and interviews with islanders in the 'archive' section. Öze's project explored the war of sovereignty over Cyprus using an electromagnetic field and the island's airspace, focusing on the interception of radio signals by the Ercan Air Control Centre and Nicosia Air Control Centre to assert control over the FIR space and sovereignty. However, the UN perceived it as a security threat - the reason given for this censorship was the use of the word 'Ercan,' which refers to an airport near Nicosia but is not internationally recognised as a port of entry. However, Senova argues that the project and interviews were not promoting the airport but rather examining the control dynamics over Cyprus on different levels. Though the UN executives avoided labelling it as 'censorship,' they justified the action as a routine application of UN regulations. Nevertheless, Senova notes that the incident revealed how the island is subjected to control and influence on multiple levels for this kind of event, in Senova.

amplifying the voices of the people on the island, transcending nationalities and ideologies.

Another important event happening in the Buffer Zone is the Buffer Fringe Festival. It was developed in 2014 by the Home for Cooperation team and has been active ever since, with the exception of the Covid-19 period. Since its inception, this project has provided a platform for artists from both communities and internationals to collaborate and showcase their work. The festival is to address sensitive issues, encourage innovative forms of expression, and foster a dynamic and diverse contemporary art movement in Cyprus. It also aimed to promote the exchange of unifying and divisive ideologies, challenging established historical perspectives and cultural identities.⁸ However, the most distinctive aspect of this festival, setting it apart from similar events worldwide, lies in its unique location within the Buffer Zone. Here, notions of normality, conflict, and accessibility become ambiguous and open to interpretation. The festival has fostered dialogues and interactions among individuals and groups within the Buffer Zone, thereby establishing a limited yet significant presence of the community within this space.

Over time, the Buffer Zone in Nicosia has transformed into a multifunctional space for all Cypriots, transcending its original purpose. It has emerged as a space for diverse activities and cooperative endeavours, where peace talks are loudly voiced. Simultaneously, it serves as a space for debate, protest, activism, and discussions on social norms, embodying acts of resistance and multiple forms of encounter. It has become a space for imagining and actualising alternative futures.

The Buffer Zone has been continuously reclaimed and appropriated by various actors, becoming a nexus where different visions intersect and manifest physically, creating distinct places within its confines. Here, power struggles unfold, and power dynamics are both reproduced and contested. It is a zone where new ideas, visions, and demands find voice and expression. Within its bounds, boundaries are dictated yet remain unmarked, symbolising the fluid nature of control and influence in this area.

Consequently, both the material and intellectual dimensions of the Buffer Zone have undergone significant transformation. It represents more than just a physical space; it encapsulates the unique identity of the city, the meanings and experiences that residents associate with it, their aspirations for the city's future, and their efforts to actualise these aspirations in the present. Thus, it can be said that the Buffer Zone has become an 'alternative space', a living testament to the evolving urban and social landscape of Nicosia.

8 Huriye Gürdalli and Sevil Bulanik, "Socio-Cultural Recovery of the Border in Nicosia: Buffer Fringe Festival over Its Boundaries", *Land (Basel)* 12, no. 2 (2023): 370.

Conceptualising an alternative space

The research and collages have highlighted how historical and spatial aspects are interconnected and should be analysed simultaneously in specific contexts. Therefore, Nicosia needs a space where race, culture, religion, social, economic, and political issues can be addressed concurrently without favouring one over the other. It should be a space where individuals can identify as Turkish or Greek but also Cypriot, represent Nicosia without being exclusively from the north or south, and embrace both structuralist and humanist perspectives, existing within and beyond its limits. Considering all these factors, the space that the collages and research point to is the In-between zone - the Buffer Zone - which serves as a focal point where all the contradictions can be acknowledged and recognised. The Buffer Zone of Nicosia can be described as a site of confrontation - a social structure in which conflicts divide the city while also connecting the two regions within the divided city. It exists as both a real and an imaginary space, intertwined with complex and shifting power relations, yet allowing for discussions on these issues and representing the potentials of the 'alternatives'.

This concept of an alternative space is not unique to this research. The notions of space and place have been redefined through the context of Cartesian dualism, which originated with Descartes and pursued the concept of absolute truth.⁹ Over time, these concepts have undergone a transformation, leading to the development of alternative perspectives. Architectural historian Siegfried Giedion highlights that Cartesian dualism perceives space as emptiness and time as a movement within that space.¹⁰ However, in contemporary understandings, space and time have a more nuanced relationship; they are distinct and cannot be conceptualised as a single entity. They constantly undergo transformation, redefining the dialectic between them. The traditional thesis-antithesis binary, defending the rationality and fluidity of modernity, generates new syntheses, alternatives, and third spaces. As a result, space breaks free from its Cartesian constraints, giving way to the emergence of an 'other', 'alternative', or 'third' space, as discussed above, where opposites can coexist. This space potentially allows the impossible to become possible, deconstructing and transforming into another dimension. It surpasses the limitations of Euclidean geometry and no longer adheres to the Cartesian order.

Many ideas, theories, and meanings have been formulated concerning such alternative space. David Harvey, for example, describes the existence of

9 Senem Kaymaz Koca and Jonathan Hale, "Conceptualizing 'Thirdplace': Exploring Embedded Narrations in Between a Spatial Trilogy", *Megaron (Istanbul, Turkey)* 12, no. 3 (2017): 488–96.

10 Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, 5th ed., r, Charles Eliot Norton Lectures; 1938-1939 (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

a 'flexible accumulation/space' that arises from what he terms the time-space squeeze, where transience, fragmentation, and disintegration open up spaces for flexible production.¹¹ Global phenomena such as transience, fragmentation, and disintegration render spaces amenable to adaptable production. Michel Foucault also introduces the concept of 'heterogeneous spaces' found in 'heterotopias', which deviate from normative spaces and are lived in different ways from traditional contexts. He notes that "we do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light; we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable to one another".¹² In other words, this heterogeneous space is a space that constantly allows for the entry and exit of new ideas, concepts and meanings; it is a place of multiplicity and mobility.

With a similar approach, architect and aesthetic philosopher Paul Virilio's 'Overexposed City' also reflects on space, where boundaries are momentary and interrupted, not adhering to chronological and traditional constraints.¹³ The city exceeds time and space throughout the heterogeneous ways, and the boundaries are not chronological and traditional but momentary and interrupted in time, with momentarily interrupted meanings. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari also propose the idea of "soft space," mentioned above, in their work *A Thousand Plateaus*, arguing against a homogeneous understanding of space. The emerging soft space embraces multiplicity and openness, offering a distinctive perception of reality in contrast to the traditional and rigid understanding of space.¹⁴ Edward Soja, on the other hand, proposes 'thirdspace,' which emerges from the deconstruction and reconstruction of 'physical-first space' and 'conceptual-second space,' becoming a space of experience that transcends binary oppositions.¹⁵ As a result, these various perspectives converge on the existence of a new space that accommodates alternative and in-between thinkers. This space is characterised by openness to possibilities, overcoming binary antagonisms, and exhibiting qualities of heterogeneity, indeterminacy, experimentality, and fractality.

It can be recognised that such space diverges from conventional understanding, defying singular definition, requiring accommodation of its

11 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990).

12 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997), 350–56.

13 Paul Virilio, "The Overexposed City", in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London : New York: Routledge, 1997), 381–90.

14 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004).

15 Edward W Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996).

inherent diversities. In this context, collage emerges as a promising and innovative approach to such space, offering a potential way into alternative spatial paradigms. Collage's boundless nature, multidimensionality, fragmented structure, experimental nature, and perpetual state of flux offer possibilities for the pursuit of alternative spatial configurations. Thus, this section experiments with the potential of collage in Nicosia's endeavour to discover an alternative space amid the city's contested texture.

Alternative space of collage

A collage is composed of fragments and does not originate from a void; hence, it does not define space within a void. However, due to its fragmentary nature, a collage generates spaces through non-linear relationships among the fragments. The space within a collage can be understood as an existential possibility rather than a tangible reality. This space, dynamic and naturalistic, ceases to be void once it is acknowledged and evolves into an alternative space shaped by experiential encounters. The continuous evolution of this space is what makes it a conceptual representation of a unified existence. The relationship that collage exhibits through fragments finds similarity with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'rhizome'.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari introduce the concept of the "rhizome" to challenge traditional hierarchical and arborescent (tree-like) structures in thinking and knowledge organisation.¹⁶ Unlike the hierarchical model, the rhizome lacks a structure based on a central authority or main trunk branching into separate, distinct categories; instead, the rhizome functions as a decentralised, non-hierarchical, and connected system. The term "rhizome" is borrowed from botany and refers to the underground stem of the plant, which spreads horizontally and sends out roots and shoots, forming a connected growth network.

The rhizome has no central organising principle or fixed starting point. Instead, it operates on the principle of pluralism, offering multiple entry and exit points, connections, and pathways. Elements in the rhizomatic model are connected in complex and diverse ways. It embraces difference and enables connections and relationships between different elements without imposing predefined categories or hierarchies. Fixed boundaries or rigid structures do not constrain the rhizome; it functions as a nomadic entity, constantly changing and adapting to the environment. Rhizomes are formed by 'assemblages' of temporary and dynamic configurations that come together with changing conditions, disintegrate, and form an inter-adaptable system.¹⁷

16 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1–27.

17 Deleuze and Guattari, 1–27.

Rhizomatic thinking allows for open-ended exploration, lateral thinking, and the potential for unexpected connections. Thus, it challenges traditional Western thought, often rooted in tree-like structures and criticises these structures for limiting creativity and perpetuating fixed identities. The rhizome emphasises the intensity of connections and relationships between elements rather than their fixed or measured quantity. It suggests that we embrace systems and structures that are more flexible, inclusive, and dynamic in understanding the world. By embracing pluralism, connectivity, and diversity, it enables a more creative and open-ended approach.

Collage, akin to the rhizome, undergoes a rhizomatic process when fragments are integrated. Originating from various places, images, objects, etc., these fragments reorganise the space they occupy and display their agency within the composition. While each fragment may reference its original place, reflecting its regained identity and meaning in dialogue with other fragments, it also appeals to the agency of the viewer. Consequently, fragments establish an experiential relationship with the space it presents, converting it into an alternative space. In other words, this reflexive reconstitution of the alternative space arises from the interplay between the fragments, unfolding as an ongoing experiential process rather than a linear sequence of events in a collage.

The alternative space within a collage is contingent upon the fragments, their agencies, and the experiential process. This interplay transforms the relationship between the elements into an experiential process, shaping the space perceived by the viewer. This experimentation occurs without adhering to a fixed period with a definite beginning and end. Instead, it brims with vitality tied to the existence of the fragments.

In the collage process, a fragment that may initially appear as the starting point can later be obscured or even removed, due to overlapping with another piece. Such changes do not signify the beginning or end of the collage but are integral steps in its evolution. Every fragment in the collage undergoes its own unique journey, each contributing to the overall composition. It results in the fragments being in a constant state of change, and the experimental processes they embody provide the alternativity that defines the collage space. This leads to a rich diversity in the individual processes of the fragments, allowing them to explore and represent alternative spatial experiences of the city within the collage.

The alternative space within a collage is not confined to a definitive and singular meaning. Instead, it embodies a spectrum of potential interpretations and perspectives. This space offers an experiential realm where fragments are mobilised without dictating specific orders. Such experimentation fosters unexpected and unplanned encounters, distinguishing this space from the

rigid structures and norms of physical reality. It facilitates the discovery of unplanned and unspoken aspects through the fragments. Within the collage, different fragments, each embodying distinct certainty, coexist. Their meanings evolve and become ambiguous, a transformation inherent to the nature of the collage's alternative space.

Every fragment in this alternative space embarks on a process of re-understanding its existence, contemplating its meaning, place, and identity. This transformation arises not only from the objective qualities of the fragment but also from its interactions with other fragments and the intuitions and experiences of both the fragment and its viewer. It can also be characterised as a particular, relational, and intuitive space that reshapes our existential place amid the paradoxes of our bodily experiences in space. It demands the agency of its viewers, coexisting and evolving with their perception.

As fragments interact within the collage's alternative space, they seek meaning and contribute to the space's evolution. This interaction and search for meaning, involving both the fragments and the viewers, shape the collage's alternative space. The space thus emerges from the fragments, is sculpted through their experiential processes, and ultimately manifests based on the viewer's interpretation. This dynamic, interpretive process defines the alternative space of collage as conceptualised in this research.

To more precisely define the alternative space created by collage, we begin with an understanding that it originates from individual fragments. These fragments undergo an experiential process, interacting among themselves and with viewers, ultimately shaping an alternative space influenced by viewer perception. By repeatedly replicating or duplicating fragments, collage creates a version of the city's spaces that never actually existed, forming a sort of deceptive urban landscape. Consequently, this space blurs the lines between reality and imagination, where the real may be perceived as imaginary and vice versa, without strict adherence to distinguishing the two. The primary requirement from viewers is their attention and engagement.

This alternative space offers a unique journey of interpretation, distinct from real-life experiences. It demands a different kind of mobility from the viewer, not physical walking but a mental and perceptual journey, invoking their agency for interpretation and understanding. Engaging with collage fragments becomes a voyage of discovery akin to a form of spatial research. In this journey, viewers encounter a blend of real and imagined experiences, emotions, events, and political choices - some familiar, some beyond comprehension. This world, although divergent from actuality, remains interconnected with it.

Through the juxtaposition of various realities, the collage's seemingly random fragments are, in fact, deliberate, integral to the city's lived experience and reflective of individual and collective identities. The composition of these fragments in the collage thus creates an 'alternative' space in the viewer's mind. This space is a realm where all possibilities, inquiries, demands, and dreams are not just conceptualised but felt and experienced. As a result, the collage fosters an alternative reality through its space, one that is shaped existentially through the interplay between the abstract and the concrete, and between conceptual and impossible spaces of lived experiences.

Focusing collage's space on Nicosia's Buffer Zone

To experience the alternative space of collage in Nicosia, this chapter's collage experiment centres on The Buffer Zone as a tangible and measurable social structure, embodying both real and imagined elements, entwined with intricate and ever-shifting power dynamics. Going back to historical and social conflicts and ethnic divides from the 1950s, this space epitomises subjugation and domination, encapsulating conflict as both cause and effect.

Over time, The Buffer Zone has undergone transformation through various events such as meetings, art gatherings, and festivals. These activities have reshaped the space conceptually, fostering alternative perspectives not only on political conflicts but also on history and society as a whole. By providing a platform for the formation of non-exclusionary communities and encouraging novel ways of thinking and acting in the present, The Buffer Zone strives to transcend the limiting binary of ethnicity. Despite commendable efforts, prevailing political, economic, and social limitations impede the realisation of a truly unified city and society. Nevertheless, this area remains an intersection where Nicosia's social, historical, and spatial elements converge and where transformation is actively pursued.

Considering the potential for Nicosia's future, the alternative space of collage becomes a prominent site for experimentation. Through the practice of collage and experiences lived within the zone, conventional binary categories are challenged, leading to a way of thinking and being that embraces heterogeneity, inclusivity, flexibility, and an awareness of boundaries without being constrained by them. The experiment offers an alternative approach to recognising political action that transcends rigid identities, eschewing divisive labels such as Greek, Turkish, Muslim, Christian, North, or South.

The collage experiment

The collage that follows represents a synthesis of my personal experiences in Nicosia intertwined with the insights gained from the collage experiences detailed in earlier chapters. While my time in Nicosia has shaped my

personal interpretation of this area, the previous collages have guided a more analytical perception, directing the selection of fragments. Therefore, this particular collage can be viewed as a comprehensive study within the context of this experimental research. However, it is important to note that this collage is not the final conclusion of my research. Rather, it serves as a synthesised representation of the research process, encapsulating both personal and analytical insights gathered throughout the study.

In the initial stages of collage-making, I delved deep into the contested history of Nicosia, unravelling its complex layers. This process involved engaging with the city's multifaceted past, acknowledging both social and personal biases, and gaining a deeper understanding of its conflicted history. This experience illuminated the inherently political and provocative nature of collage as a medium. Through its fragments, collage has the power to weave compelling narratives, a quality particularly resonant in a city as intricate as Nicosia.

The subsequent phase of collage-making, which focused on interpreting the city through its fragments, highlighted Nicosia's inherently fragmented structure - a direct reflection of its conflict-ridden context. However, these collage experiments also uncovered gaps within the cityscape, opening avenues for creative and imaginative exploration. This potential for exploration became especially apparent during the creation of collages involving fragments of the Buffer Zone, as exemplified in 'Narrative 5: The Door to the Other Side' discussed in Chapter 4. These narratives not only depicted the city's fragmented reality but also offered glimpses into the possibilities of reimagining and reinterpreting these spaces.

In the preceding collage process, an analysis of Nicosia's limitations was conducted, with a particular focus on understanding the city's planned development prior to exploring its untapped potential. It became clear that a primary source of these limitations was the Buffer Zone, which has historically contributed to the city's division. Despite the Buffer Zone originating from conflict and presenting challenges to future city planning, the collage experience suggests a significant insight: this zone does not necessarily limit alternative thinking about the city. When engaged through collage, the fragments within this zone do not merely conform to its constraints. Instead, they provoke and inspire free exploration and inquiry. As a result, this realisation has been pivotal in amalgamating various collage-making experiences, culminating in a creative and imaginative representation of Nicosia within the alternative space created by collage. The insights gained from confronting and reinterpreting the Buffer Zone's limitations through collage have been instrumental in shaping this collage experience of this section.

In this design-based research, each phase has been mutually reinforcing. The knowledge gained through collage-making has continuously informed and evolved the research process. Therefore, the collage experience detailed in this section, while distinct, harmoniously aligns with the preceding ones. Facing the challenge of limited data availability in the Buffer Zone, this phase adopted an innovative approach. Instead of initiating the collage with an existing fragment, my own drawings, based on personal observations and available images of the Buffer Zone, served as the foundational elements. These drawings acted as a personalised interpretation of this contested space.

The additional elements incorporated into the collage can be seen as reinterpretations or reproductions of fragments previously used or collected. This creative process was significantly influenced by scholarly arguments advocating the concept of alternative space. The overarching aim here was not simply to depict an idea through imagery, but to engage in an experimental dialogue with these concepts. Thus, the collage became a medium for communicating and exploring these ideas in a tangible form, allowing for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the Buffer Zone and its implications within the context of Nicosia.

This process of experiential exploration aligns with the teachings of Woods, who advocated for an alternative way of thinking in war-damaged cities. Woods' work with Sarajevo presented fragments not as definitive solutions for the inhabitants but as a means to envision a city life aligned with their personal narratives.¹⁸ In a similar vein, this collage acts as an 'injection' into the urban fabric of Nicosia. It is not about creating a space as envisioned by the artist-collagist-architect, but rather about offering the possibility of a space that Cypriots can shape with their own interpretations. Thus, the purpose of this collage extends beyond providing a conclusive answer to the city's challenges. It is intended as an alternative perspective, an opportunity to perceive the city through a different lens. It does not lay claim to absolute truth or certainty. Instead, by addressing and questioning the city's problems, this collage transcends its limitations and envisions a world beyond them. Therefore, this collage should not be seen as a final statement or a definitive representation of Nicosia. It is, at its core, an experimental endeavour that offers a fresh perspective on the city, inviting viewers to engage with and contemplate the urban landscape in new and potentially transformative ways.

18 Lebbeus Woods, "War and Architecture", in *Pamphlet Architecture 15* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).

Collaging The Buffer Zone

From my research diary, Eagle Eye Boutique Hotel, Nicosia, 22 October 2021.

During my trip to Northern Cyprus, I spent most of the time along the Green Line at the border north of Nicosia, looking around and trying to get a sense of the reality of the border. For me alone, this border with its crossing points was really a border, a border between nations. As I passed through the neighbourhoods, streets, and abandoned houses, I couldn't help but notice the dilapidated state of every metal surface along the border. The walls were on the verge of collapse, and a thick layer of rust covered everything in sight. Peering through the holes in the border, I could see that the buildings within the no man's land were nearly engulfed by lush greenery, while the ones that remained exposed were in a state of ruin. Astonishingly, many of the structures facing the Greek side still bore the scars of bullet holes. Abandoned or forcibly vacated by their owners, these buildings stood neglected, consumed by overgrown bushes, weeds, and trees that extended their branches through broken windows and collapsed roofs. Ironically, each of the crumbling buildings seemed to be held together with a wooden or metal structural framework, trying to prevent them from collapsing completely. But at the same time, it felt as if a new skin was forming - not exactly new or not exactly old.

The greenery had already begun to envelop these frames...like covering their sins.

The desolation along the border was further accentuated by rusty shutters and signs. Approximately every ten metres, a red warning sign depicting a soldier holding a gun, accompanied by the words "Forbidden, No Crossing, and No Photography," served as a reminder of the restricted nature of the area. There were not many people around. But, at one point, I felt a shadow walking with me. Whenever I approached to look through the holes in the border, it stepped towards me. And at one point in my walk, I was sure I was being watched, and...one man approached me and asked me with a slight smile to delete the pictures I had taken. This was something I had heard before, so I was prepared. Thus, I wasn't scared, but I was introduced to the reality of Nicosia. The border does exist, the divided city has its own rules, and it is almost impossible for me to cross from the north to the south.

The border area was strewn with discarded items, remnants of

the past, dying automobiles, and abandoned objects. As I ventured through the streets divided by the Green Line, I made a list of everything that caught my eye:

A wall separating derelict shops, with a tree emerging from behind it, and a makeshift shack constructed from miscellaneous materials.

An abandoned vehicle that had once been deemed luxurious.

A concrete wall accompanied by a stool and adorned with greenery.

A window wedged between two ruins, obscured by pieces of wood and shutters.

Wheels are strategically placed to close gaps.

A building sealed off with a piece of wood and a sofa positioned in front of it.

An old room brimming with numerous artefacts.

A rusty staircase leads to the top floor of an ancient house.

Stacked trunks were serving an unknown purpose.

Graffiti adorns the walls at the intersection of the Green Line and the streets.

The skeletal remains of a building featuring a collapsed roof, broken door and window frames.

Fragments of weathered wood.

Charred wood within tin cans.

Indecipherable scraps of rusted metal.

A balcony on the verge of collapse, with dangling cables.

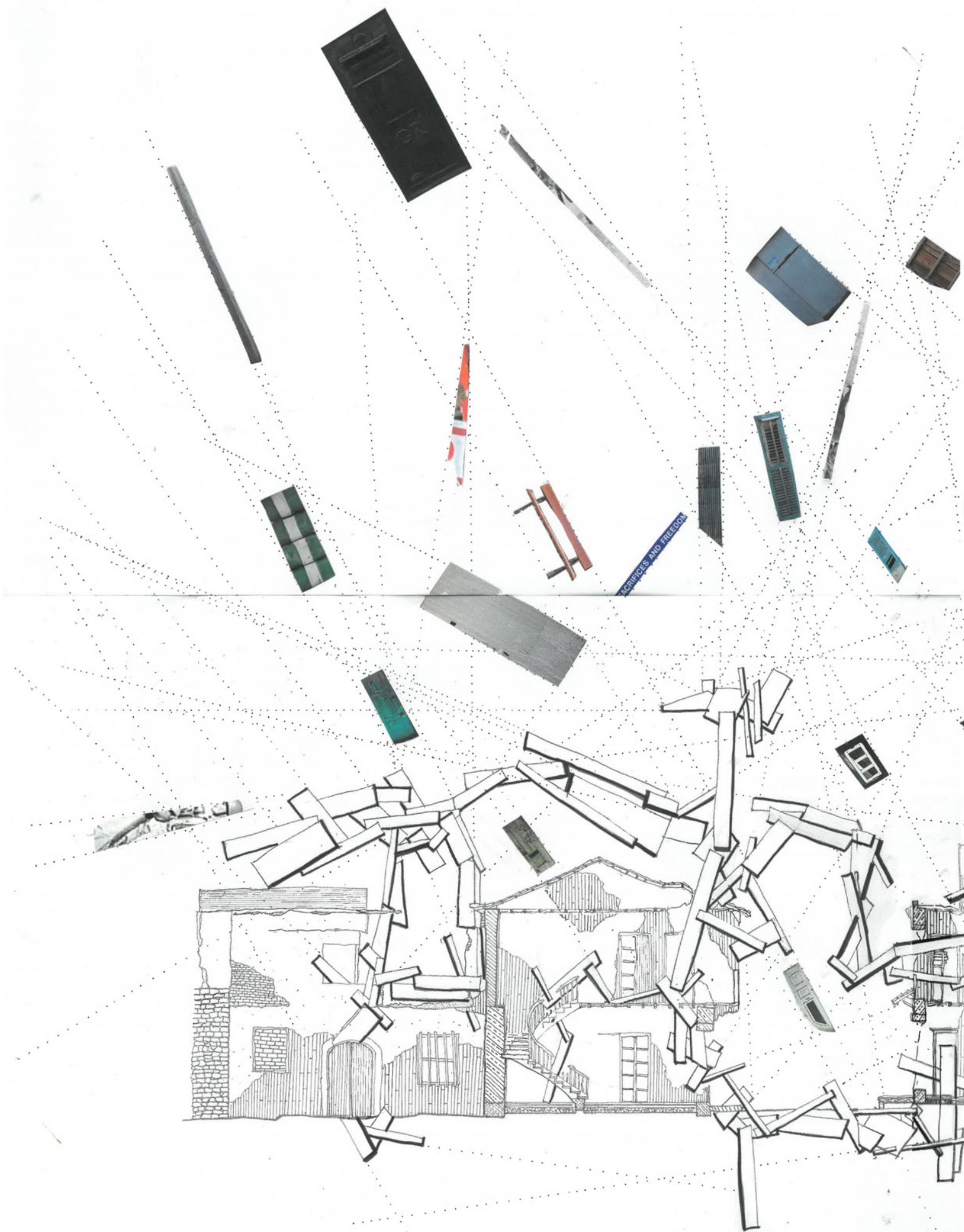
Surveillance cameras are positioned at regular intervals.

The list continued to grow as I sought to document every detail for future incorporation into my collage work. However, this stroll also triggered inexpressible thoughts about the city. It can be said that the conflict created a new texture, a skin for the division of Nicosia. It was as if the city had become a living collage, constructed from discarded remnants and residual materials, ultimately forming its own boundaries. With each layer of abandoned objects, a cartographic representation of memory relating to the conflict could be envisaged, or perhaps an interactive museum could be

established to narrate the process of segregation.

The following day, I decided to visit the Arabahmet neighbourhood, which left me utterly stunned. Everything I had read, learned, and researched about this area seemed to be a fabrication. Instead, I found streets and buildings that had undergone a complete renovation, appearing as though they had been constructed just yesterday. It felt as if I had been transported to one of those picturesque tourist destinations often found in the southern parts of Turkey: traditional houses with bay windows, occasional colonial-era mailboxes, freshly plastered facades, and meticulously aligned cobblestone pavements. I meticulously scanned my surroundings, searching for traces of the post-division era when Arabahmet had transformed into a migrant neighbourhood abandoned by the islanders. Regrettably - or perhaps fortunately - no remnants of its complex history were discernible. According to Nicosia Master Planning for communal living, the strategic plan was to transform the city into a multifunctional centre, preserving historical sites while integrating future functions. I assumed that they had finished their planning for the Arabahmet neighbourhood. As I reached the end of the street, I encountered the Venetian walls. Across from the moat stood Ledra Palace, its windows barricaded with sandbags and armed soldiers stationed in its vicinity. Suddenly, Woods' teachings echoed in my mind: In the midst of all the controversy, can the urban fabric devastated by conflict contribute to the revitalisation of the city? Can the traces of the war shape the future of the city? Or should they? Perhaps it is best to close the lid on this past. It's a difficult decision full of uncertainties.¹⁹

19 From my research diary, 22 October 2021.





This collage begins with a representative drawing of the Buffer Zone. Based on my observations and the images I had access to, it can be observed that the two sides of the Buffer Zone are composed of buildings on the verge of demolition, supported by various structures to prevent complete destruction. This observation forms the background of the collage. The drawing depicts the abandoned and dilapidated state of the buildings after the conflict, along with the new fabric introduced to minimise further deterioration due to their unresolved situation. However, it is important to note that this illustration is an exaggerated depiction based on my personal visual experiences rather than a reflection of the actual situation. It appears as if a new and unrecognisable structure is attempting to cover these crumbling buildings. This addition not only fills the gaps of the building but also extends over them, partially obscuring their original form and location. The intensity of this new addition centres around the lost texture of the buildings, stemming from the post-battle attempts to fill the gaps with materials and support the structure until a final decision on the area's future is made.

This drawing is accompanied by fragments. These fragments are fragments of images collected from the Buffer Zone. In the context of the Buffer Zone's reality, these fragments represent objects or artefacts that have been utilised or abandoned in and around the buffer zone to cover the gaps in the area. However, these fragments are not directly added to the existing drawing; instead, they are placed within a void, seemingly suspended over the Buffer Zone. Each fragment is connected to this region by lines, projecting and visualising the Buffer Zone. These lines intersect without a clear beginning or planned end, and the fragments are positioned on these lines.

The fragments include objects symbolising everyday life, such as refrigerators, televisions, barrels, armchairs, doors, windows, chests, stairs, lamps, shutters, chairs, and signboards. Additionally, there are fragments associated with other symbols and elements. For instance, the silhouette of a soldier can be seen in the centre-left of the collage, while the flag of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus appears in the upper left. Furthermore, blue and inscribed fragments are taken from an image of Nicosia on the Southern border - with the 'sacrifices and freedom' fragment in the centre-left, 'nothing is gained without' in the centre-top, and 'without blood' in the bottom-right. The top right features a fragment of Grivas' image. At first glance, the composition may seem like flying objects, but upon closer examination, it retains the shocking, political, and provocative nature characteristic of a collage. The intention here is not to merely provoke but to acknowledge the conflictual history and political nature of this city.

Collage is often a representation of underdevelopment, not in the sense of implying absence or a desire to preserve undeveloped circumstances,

but rather in surrendering to the moment of creation, where a world of boundless possibilities emerges. Such is the character of this collage. The fragments of contested spaces in Nicosia come together in this collage, attempting to reveal the potential of something that might not otherwise be perceived. In this attempt, as the viewer delves into the intricacies of this composition, multiple interpretations can be generated, each leading to diverse conclusions. This richness of meaning is a direct result of the alternative space offered by the collage through its fragments. However, within the context of this thesis, my interpretation, both as the creator of the collage and as the first interpreter, is as follows:

Allegorical voyage of collaged dialogue: a furniture store

[1]

The fragments of contested spaces in Nicosia become a collage and thereby show the possibility of something not otherwise glimpsed. Collage often embodies the character of underdevelopment, not implying absence or a desire to preserve undeveloped circumstances, but rather surrendering to the moment of creating a world where possibilities abound. Such is the character of this collage.

This collage offers alternative worlds free from predetermined laws or historical outcomes of the divided city of Nicosia. The flying fragments intentionally divert attention from the perfection of their original objects or places, exploring the potential of “alternative spaces” that exist beyond predetermined codes. Instead of conforming to dictated definitions tied to specific places and times, these fragments engage with the contested space to examine the contingent and arbitrary aspects of “alternative spaces.”

The collage situates the fragments in an indeterminate space without a fixed background, which is shaped and opened up by their presence. Through a choreography of potential connections and multidirectional forces, the fragments create a dialogue with the buildings attempting to articulate Nicosia’s buffer zone, becoming the voice of these structures. While the buildings may appear ruined and abandoned, the fragments seek refuge in these gaps.

The fragments, consciously devoid of identity, possess a unique power of listening and speaking. The lines connecting them facilitate communication and the flow of thoughts. Readers of this collage find themselves engaged in conversations within the spaces suggested by the composition, each time discovering new

points of connection and initiating distinct dialogues. However, this dialogue transcends specific themes and real-world issues; it embodies communication and communicability itself. The fragments stand as guardians of openness, allowing for memory, cultural anticipation, and the establishment of place. In other words, the fragments promise that something will transpire in the future as the inhabitants of the city respond to the world's openness - the alternative space. The world depicted in the collage is not a mere opposition to Nicosia's reality; rather, it originates from it and remains oriented towards it.

A collage positioned in the moment of dialogue provides a space for establishing and grounding new perspectives. It demonstrates the freedom to create from scratch, using fragments to build an alternative world. This dialogue is not confined by mapping, culture, religion, restrictions, rules, or debates; it liberates itself and repeats differently with each communicator. Thus, an underdeveloped collage offers possibilities for alternative spaces, allowing us to get lost in dialogue with the fabric of the city beyond the confines of its discrete limits, fostering uniqueness and organising the space to create an alternative world.

Collage thrives on starting anew and from the void. As viewers, we position ourselves at this point, which can be called "nowhere." The recognisable sections of the buildings in this composition indicate that such collages representing singular organisations of "nowhere" are created in any space, especially in regions situated neither fully within the "alternative world" nor entirely marginalised. Hence, the collage offers a blend of urban authenticity and nothingness. The depiction of the buildings as ruins does not signify the space's abandonment but rather exposes it to the moment of the Buffer Zone's establishment, provoking inquiry. Furthermore, the collage seeks to define limitlessness by referencing the limits of Nicosia.

Collage exists in its moment and is historicised, named, and interpreted through its fragments. Its ambiguity, openness, and limitlessness allow it to be relevant at any moment and in any place. Therefore, though subject to interpretation, this collage only serves as a reference to Nicosia, uniquely questioning all its limits and contested spaces, presenting an alternative way of thinking. However, this alternative is not restricted by rigid rules or one person's perspective. In the context of this research, I have offered my own interpretation, acknowledging its subjectivity and bias. I act as the director of the dialogue, the initiator of communication.

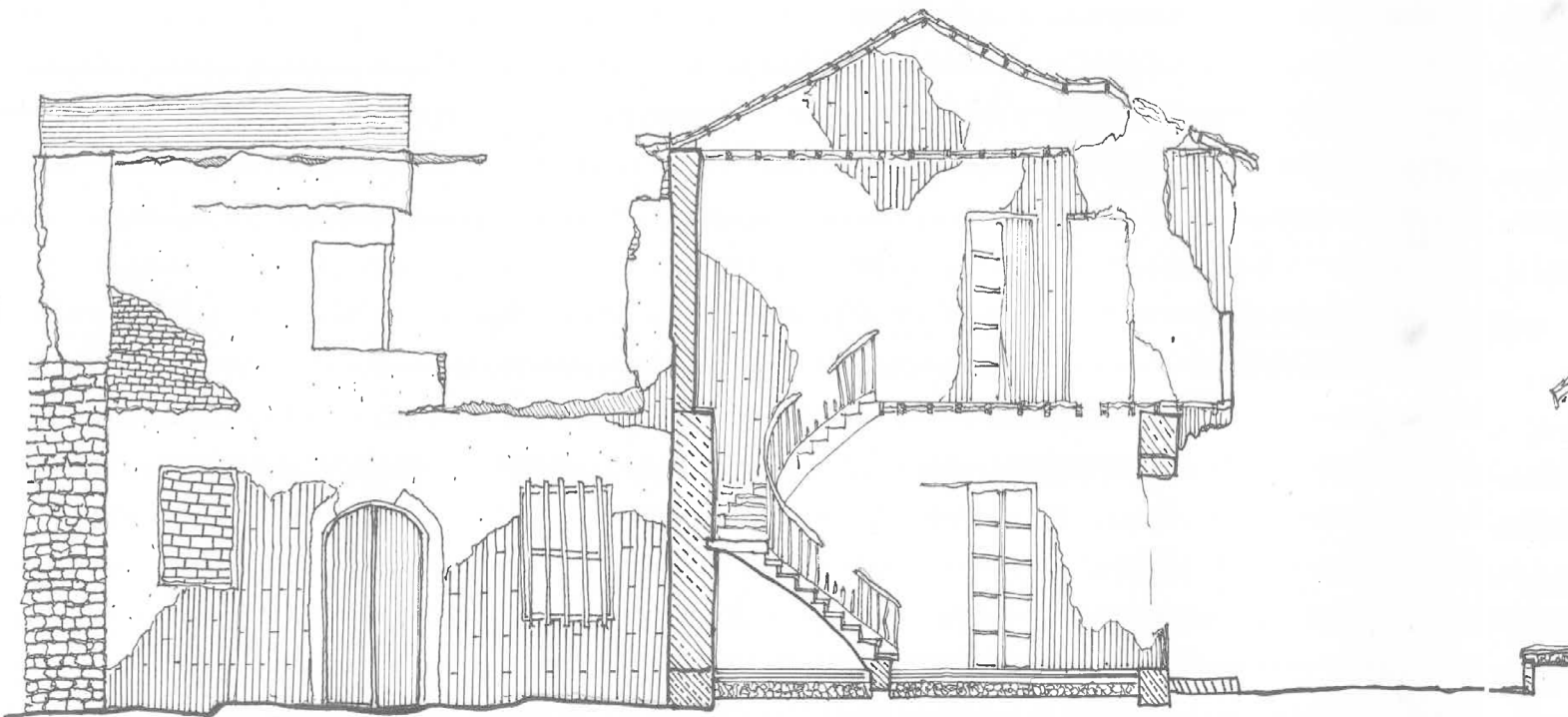
Yet, the circulation of this image is a letter to the city's inhabitants, leaving it to the potential dialogues with them to unfold.

As my own interpretation, in this letter, I offer them a furniture store where they could share memories of the fighting, memories of the conflict, memories of the past, and desires of the future. It is a store to share ideas, a space for discussion and a ground for an encounter. It is a political space due to its fragmental nature, but it encourages dialogue, not fighting. It is provocative but aims at sharing, not division. It mirrors not just the pleasant but also the sombre memories of Nicosia, representing the city's reality. This portrayal can be both authentic and misleading at times. It is an experiment - an experiment to evoke specific recollections, emotions, and thoughts through its fragments. Therefore, this is not the only and most valid reading of the collage, but only my interpretation. There will be other interpretations, and they should have been. But in the context of this practice-based research, this is my interpretation, not only but one of them.²⁰

20 - From collage diary 5 May 2023. - For the first time, I start the collage project with an idea. It wasn't about the physical appearance of the collage but rather the concept behind it. This idea has lingered in my mind ever since I experienced the Buffer Zone first-hand, witnessing its remarkable texture. As I documented in my travel diary, the fabric of the Buffer Zone resembled a repository for lost and forgotten items or, more dramatically, a wall of memories. This unique encounter inspired me to contemplate the area deeply and propose something meaningful for the city.

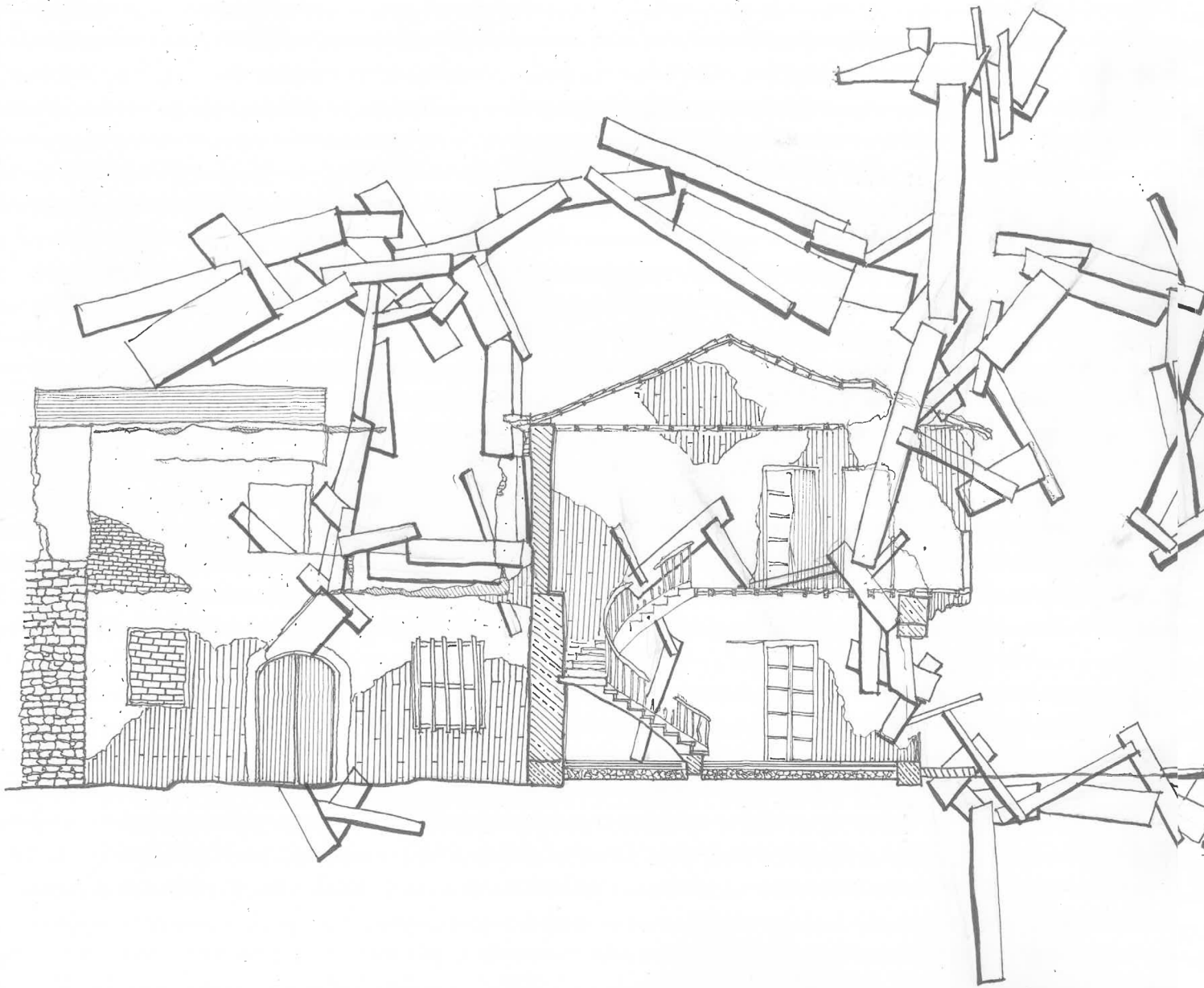
Although I couldn't find detailed images of the Buffer Zone, I collected myself from the North, and I believe I possessed enough information to envision and illustrate the Buffer Zone vividly. Thus, instead of using images to illustrate the Buffer Zone, I decided to draw the area. My drawing depicted ruined buildings, gaps, lost textures, and a road down the middle - the Buffer Zone. From the pictures I saw, I interpreted the wooden and metal poles, which were strategically placed to prevent the complete collapse of these ruins. The overlapping poles and fragments appeared to create a new order, seemingly converging around these gaps. I admit my interpretation may have been a bit exaggerated, but I firmly believed that these pieces should stand out from the everyday items discarded there. These fragments represented a step in preserving history until a decision could be made, and in doing so, they gave rise to a new texture in the buffer zone.

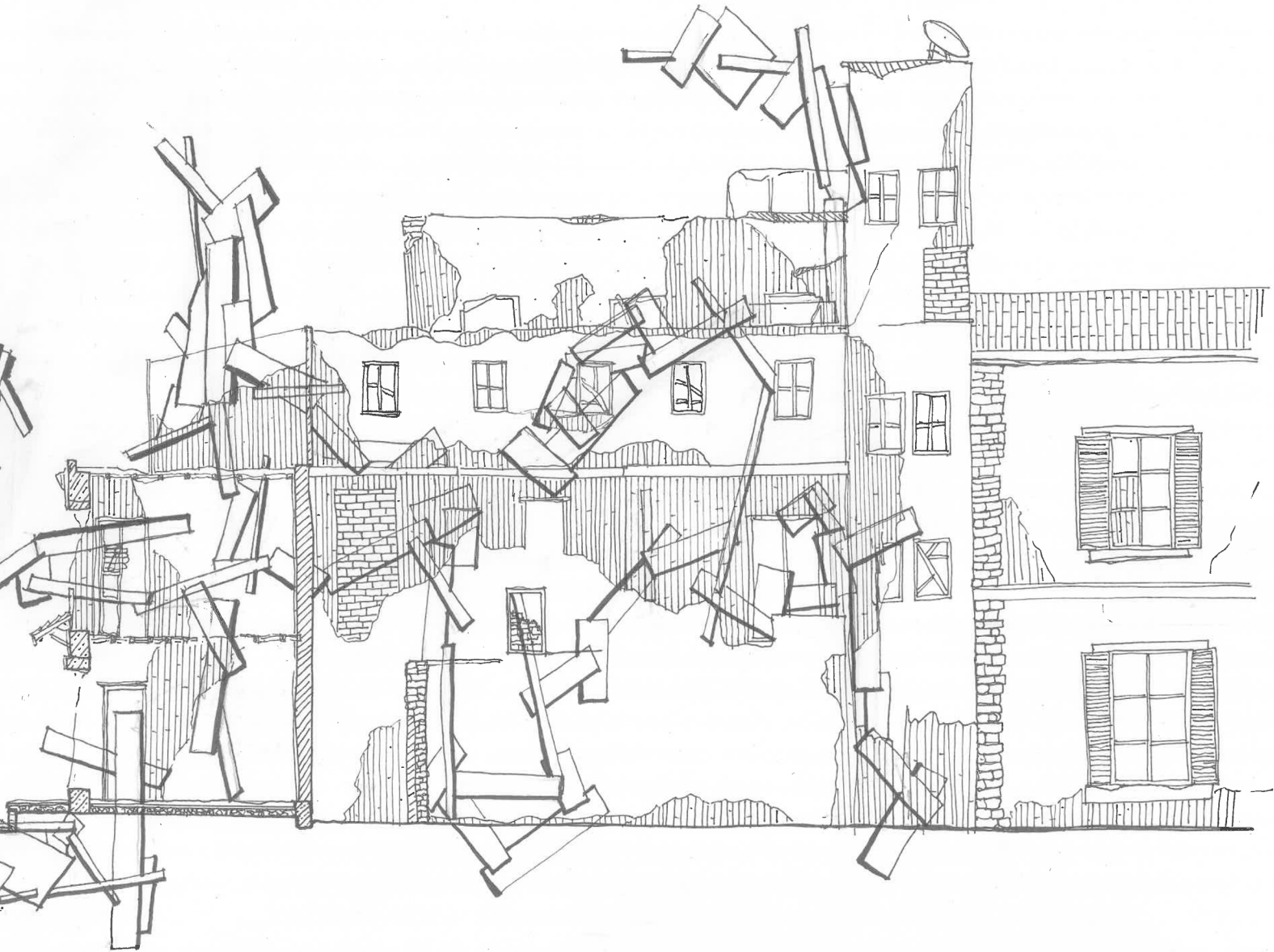
Subsequently, I collected various fragments from images taken around the buffer zone and endeavoured to relate them to the created Buffer Zone in my drawing. As I experimented with the concept, I couldn't be certain whether the flying objects were going towards or coming from the buffer zone. However, that was the idea I sought to capture. Ultimately, it is up to the Cypriots to decide their meaning. Nevertheless, I was determined to propose a project for the city - without wishing to lay down the law - a furniture shop that emerged from the remnants of conflict!



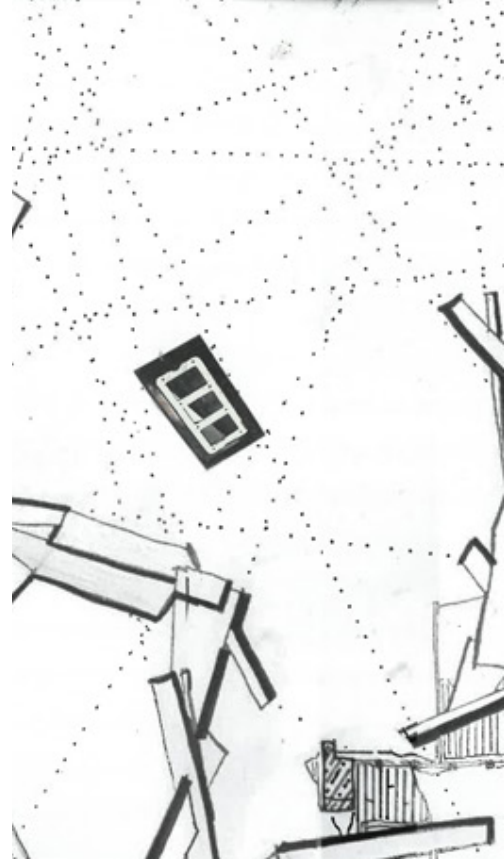
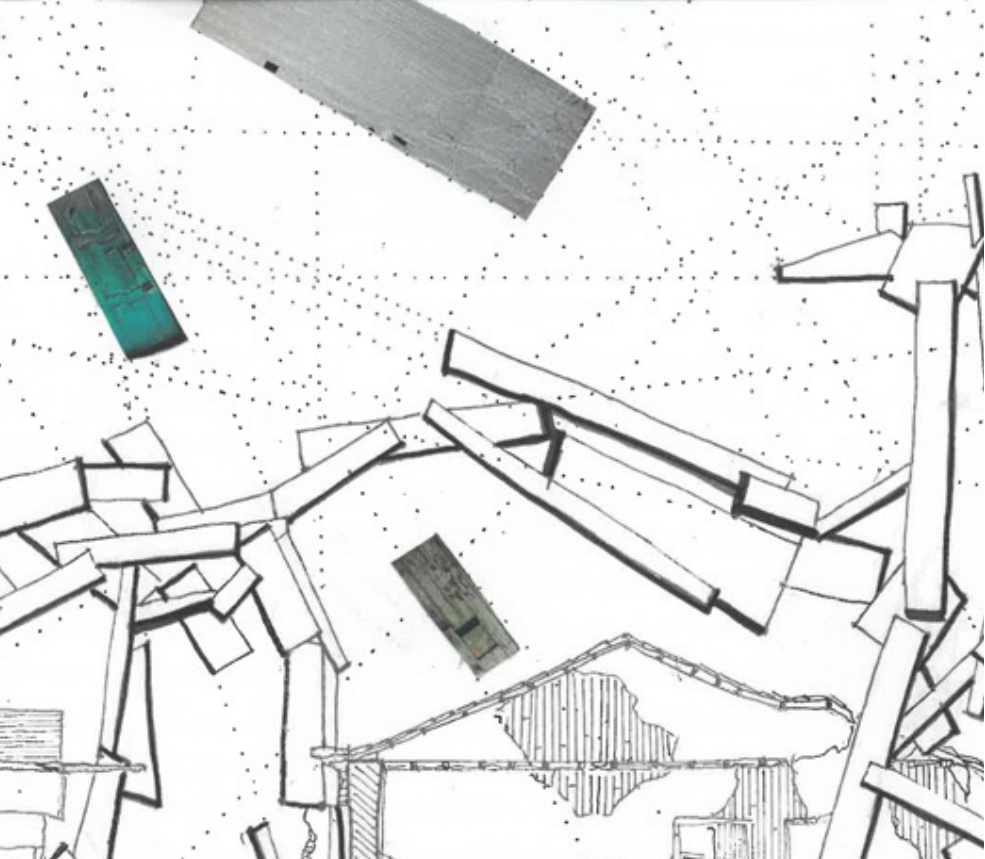
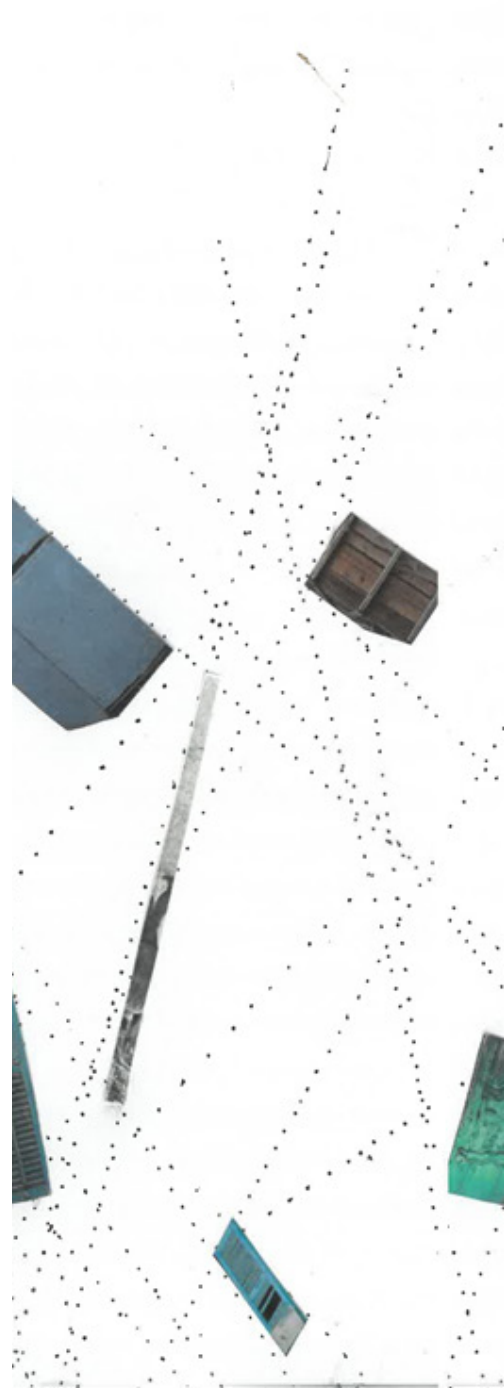
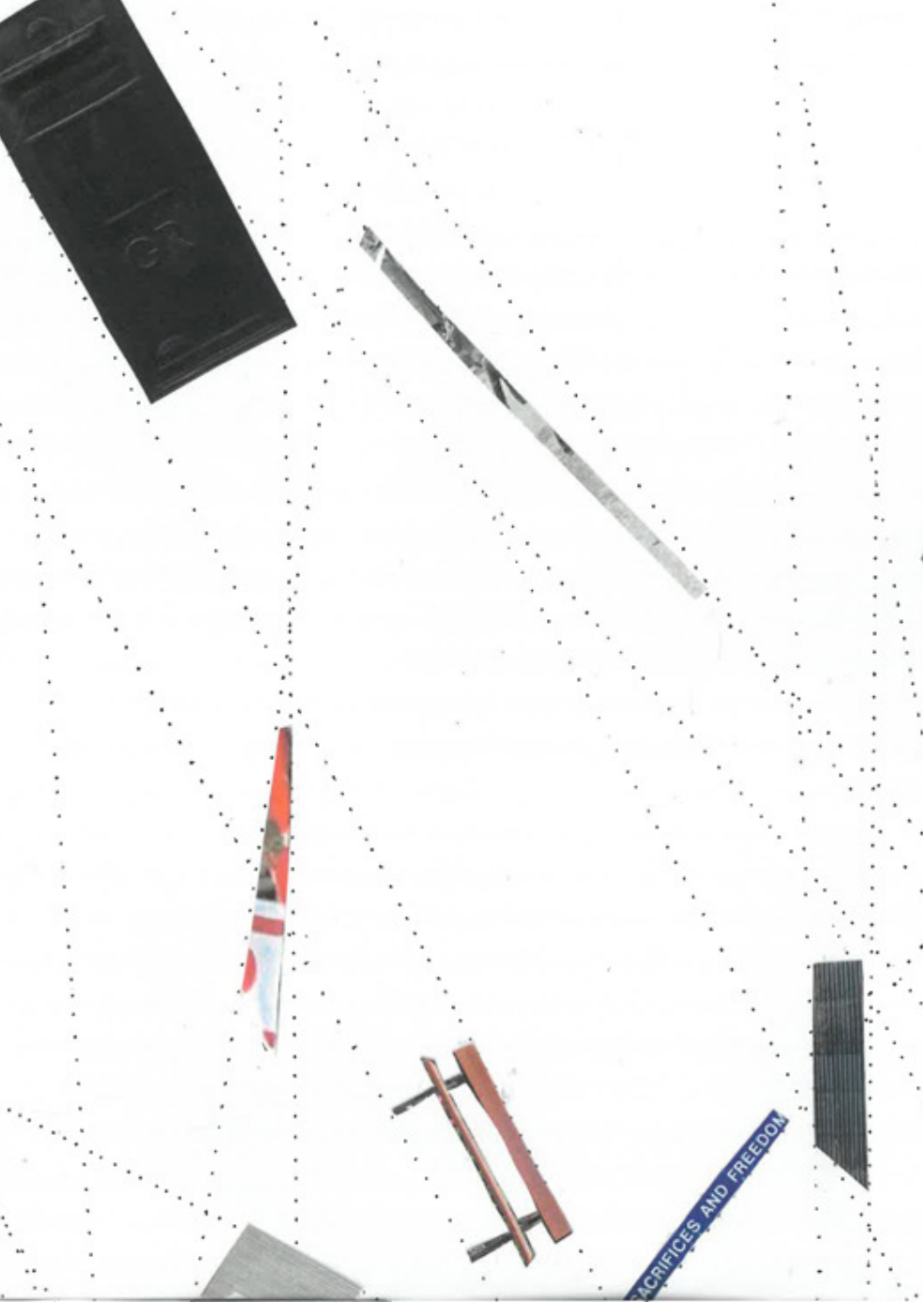


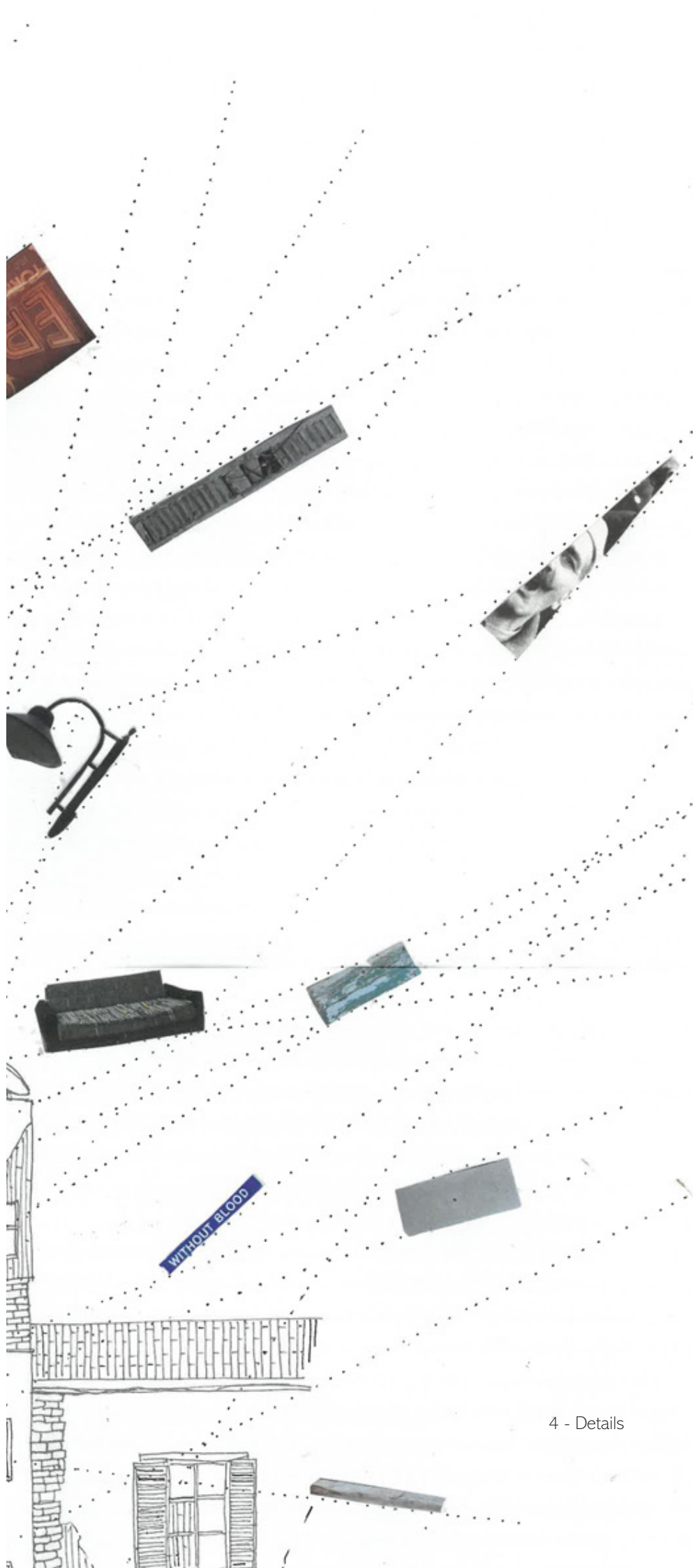
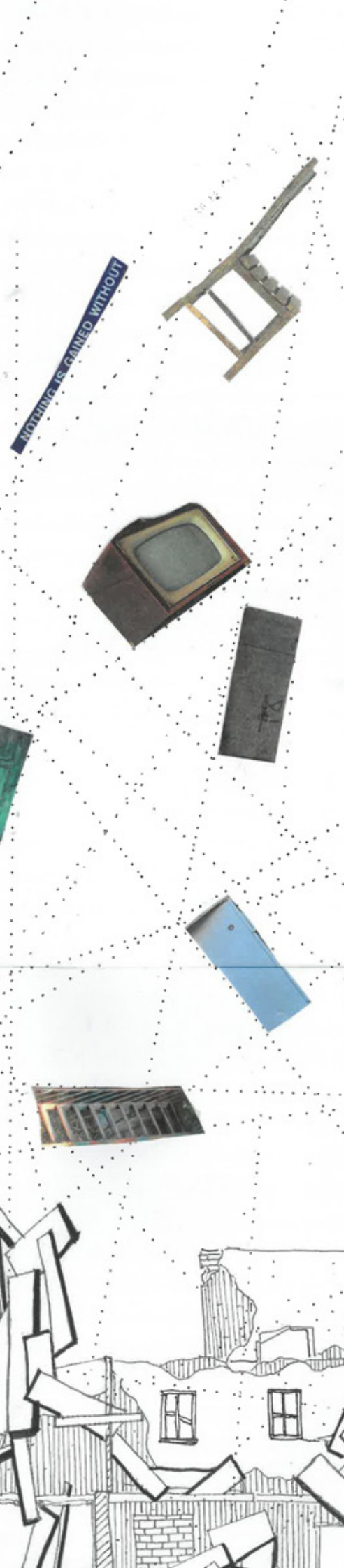
2 - Collage-making process, drawing border





3 - Collage-making process, drawing inside border





Here is my imaginary space in the Buffer Zone;

From collage diary 5 May 2023.

“The Furniture Store”

Location:

Within the remnants of the Venetian Walls of Nicosia, you will discover abandoned objects and spaces and numerous streets where each house is divided in two. These houses can be accessed from either the “Turkish Side,” but when you look out from the back window, you will see “The Republic of Cyprus,” or vice versa. Each house serves as a mirror of itself.

Inside the Buffer Zone, doors, windows, and gaps have been blocked to form walls, while walls have been torn apart to create doors. As a result, you can enter the shop through any gap you fit.

Amidst the wild landscape of weeds and dust, washing machines, televisions, sofas, chairs, and signboards soften the harsh scenery. This “Furniture Store” embodies every part of the Buffer Zone. Instead of arranging objects like any ordinary store, replicating a home’s living room or kitchen, this shop embraces the tradition of sophisticated realism within this contested space. It transforms into an extraordinary and mysterious spectacle, a sort of “memory land” immersed in confusion, where rationality and imagination collide through its architectural elements, objects, spaces, and geometries found within the Buffer Zone. Therefore, if you are interested in this experience, we welcome your visit. For those in search of lost objects or, dare I say, memories, here lies an opportunity to find them.

- Donations are accepted if you possess an object acquired after the population exchange and are looking to reunite it with its rightful owner.

Opening Time:

For the Northern Part - Odd-numbered days of the month

For the Southern Part - Even-numbered days of the month

For International Visitors - Please adhere to the day rules of the country you entered the island from.

PS: TAXFREE - Bargain valid.

As mentioned above, this interpretation reflects my perspective both as a collagist and as the initial interpreter. Therefore, it should not be interpreted somehow as a concrete proposal, nor as the definitive outcome of the collage itself. However, as noted in this interpretation and in my diary, the collage has provided a dialogical space, inspired by the fragments of Nicosia. Throughout the process of creating this collage, it has evolved in my imagination, forming a narrative that delves into the city and its contested spaces. Imagining a shop in the no-man's zone of Nicosia might seem far-fetched in the current context. Yet, the collage did not directly prompt me to think about or question this impossibility. Rather, it offered me a free space that enabled the development of a narrative around this concept.

Similar to Woods' Sarajevo project introduced in Part I, this work represents a re-envisioning of the city's textures. This narrative encompasses not just the depiction of Nicosia's Buffer Zone but also the traces of the city's contested history and fabric. In this image, the contested textures of Nicosia are reimagined, not to delineate a boundary but to propose an alternative reality. Hence, the intention of this collage is not to suggest the actual establishment of a shop in the Buffer Zone of Nicosia. It instead leverages the notion of the shop to draw attention to the area and to offer a space for imaginative exploration of possibilities. As a result, the collage can be perceived as both a representation of the city and a reverie of it. By integrating fragments of history, conflict, division, and urban life, I have engaged with the Buffer Zone and speculated about a potential project. In other words, I worked with collage as an alternative means of interaction in the contested space of Nicosia.

Collage's alternative space in the Buffer Zone

In this chapter, the potential of collage as an alternative method for engaging with contested spaces is explored, with a specific focus on the Buffer Zone in Nicosia. This exploration leads to the conceptualisation of an 'alternative space' within the city, examined through the creative practice of collage-making. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as Harvey's 'flexible space', Foucault's 'heterogeneous space', Virilio's 'Overexposed City', Deleuze and Guattari's 'soft space', and Soja's 'thirdspace', alternative space is envisioned as open, heterogeneous, ambiguous, and fragmented - characteristics that mirror the nature of collage.

The Buffer Zone, traditionally perceived as a dividing line, emerged as an alternative space that not only separates but also connects. It serves as a unique venue for peace initiatives and dialogues, embodying both activism and the possibility of reconciliation. The chapter synthesised knowledge and experiences from both Nicosia and the collage series produced so far,

culminating in a focused collage-making process. However, the primary outcome of this process was not just the creation of a collage but a deeper understanding of the space, interpreted through my dual perspective as both a collagist and a researcher.

In this context, I undertook a collage-making process with a focus on Nicosia's Buffer Zone, aiming to define its alternative space through the medium of collage. This process was deeply personal, informed by my own experiences and reflections. Faced with a lack of detailed images of the Buffer Zone, I relied on personal observations to illustrate this area. My approach diverged from earlier collages, where fragments were used more strategically. Instead, I chose to directly depict the Buffer Zone's characteristics. As noted in my diary:

Although I couldn't find detailed images of the Buffer Zone, I collected some from the North, and I believe I possessed enough information to envision and illustrate the Buffer Zone vividly. Thus, instead of using images to illustrate the Buffer Zone, I decided to draw the area. My drawing depicted ruined buildings, gaps, lost textures, and a road down the middle - the Buffer Zone.²¹

While this chapter presented a collage, it delved deeply into the narrative of the city. In contrast to previous collage processes, the fragments in this piece did not dominate the composition. Instead, they were strategically positioned to guide a specific thought process. Each fragment, with connections traced back to earlier collages, contributed to a cohesive yet open-ended composition. The paths suggested by this composition were intentionally left ambiguous. Reflecting on this in my diary, I noted:

I collected various fragments from images taken around the buffer zone and endeavoured to relate them to the created Buffer Zone in my drawing. As I experimented with the concept, I couldn't be certain whether the flying objects were going towards or coming from the buffer zone. However, that was the idea I sought to capture. Ultimately, it is up to the Cypriots to decide their meaning.²²

Through this collage-making process, collage revealed itself as a dynamic medium, transcending traditional notions of space. It resonated with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'rhizome,' fostering an environment where diverse elements interact and continuously evolve in meaning. This approach disrupted linear and hierarchical thought structures, promoting a multifaceted and interconnected view. The alternative space of the collage thus emerged as a novel approach to envisioning Nicosia's future, cultivating

21 From collage diary 5 May 2023

22 From collage diary 5 May 2023

new spatial dimensions and facilitating varied social interactions.

I presented my personal interpretation within the context of the collage. This interpretation represented my initial perspective on the city. Drawing from my observations and experiences in the collage-making process, I produced a narrative about the city. This narrative imagined a furniture store set up in the Buffer Zone. However, this was not just a physical structure. Rather, it served as a metaphor for a space of reflection, remembrance, and mobilisation, reminiscent of Woods' approach in his Sarajevo project explained in Part I. As expressed in my diary:

It transforms into an extraordinary and mysterious spectacle, a sort of "memory land" immersed in confusion, where rationality and imagination collide through its architectural elements, objects, spaces, and geometries found within the Buffer Zone. Therefore, if you are interested in this experience, we welcome your visit. For those in search of lost objects or, dare I say, memories, here lies an opportunity to find them.²³

As a result of the collage experiment created in this chapter, collage has evolved beyond a mere art form; it now serves as a metaphor for understanding and experiencing space. This medium opened up to multiple interpretations, possibilities, and narratives, inviting an exploration of the intricate interplay between reality and imagination, the tangible and the abstract. Collage blended the real with the imagined, offering a distinct perspective on urban landscapes and personal experiences within them. It encouraged a departure from conventional thinking, urging me to delve into the richness and complexity of my experiences in a constantly changing and interconnected world. By embracing pluralism, diversity, and the unexpected, collage compels me to re-evaluate the notions of space, identity, and existence in Nicosia.

Therefore, the conceptualised space of the collage in this section also embodies a realm where ideas proliferate in the mind. It offered me, as a researcher and collagist, the ability to engage with a space that seemed almost unreachable, to articulate something about the city, and even to speculate ideas. In doing so, the collage did not adhere to any restrictions or preconceived conditions. By urging me to think beyond conventional structures in a space that was challenging to access, it provided an opportunity to explore the richness and complexity of our experiences in a world that is constantly evolving and interconnected. This exploration was undertaken without any preconditions. While this interpretation may appear personal, the collage fulfilled its purpose by offering a space of freedom and

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experience, transforming the city's fragments into potential.

The insights generated during the collage process have significantly influenced the shaping of this chapter. However, they also raised several questions. Firstly, while the production of these comments underlines the dialogical nature of collage, the fact that these views are solely mine prompts me to ponder what other interpretations might be possible. In other words, the diversity of interpretations and the agency of collage arouse curiosity. The next chapter seeks to explore this curiosity by delving into the dialogical potential of the collage through an exhibition. This exhibition is not only a showcase of the collage but also an embodiment of the collage space in a physical space. By creating a tangible collage environment within the exhibition, it resonates with and extends the idea of 'alternative space', providing a platform for engaging with and understanding the varied perspectives and dialogues it elicits. This physical representation of the collage space offers an opportunity for visitors to experience and interact with the concept of collage space, further enriching the dialogical exploration initiated by them.

Chapter 7

The Exhibition Space
Dialogical collages

This chapter opens with the following question, as introduced above:

When viewers encounter collages created from fragments of contested spaces, how do these fragments influence their interpretations and thoughts?

This chapter focuses on the potential for collage as a medium to create a dialogic environment that promotes understanding and communication in the contested space of Nicosia.

The communicative power of collaged images takes centre stage in this inquiry. Building on the collage sequences developed in previous chapters, this process has led to an exploration of Nicosia's historical layers and contested textures, also opening up an imaginative space for conceptualising the divided city. Through my own work in the previous chapters, I have shown that collage can enable experimentation and new perspectives, unbounded by the limitations of contested spaces. This approach resonates with Woods' concept of 'free space' from the Sarajevo Project, as introduced in Part I. Collage has the ability to transform any space into an alternative realm, unveiling its potential through fragments and encouraging further imagination about the city. As explored previously, I delved into this alternative space of collage, presenting my own interpretation of Nicosia's Buffer Zone from a collagist-researcher's perspective. However, it is important to recognise that this interpretation is just one among many.

To further explore this potential, I curated an exhibition space that enabled the testing of dialogues encapsulating the intricate relationship between contested space and collage. The dialogues emerging in this collaged space offered opportunities for creative mediation between the prevalent material narratives and metaphorical narratives of contested spaces. This expands the imaginative framework, positioning contested space research as a form of creative practice. Therefore, this chapter extends the discussion to encompass the experiences of exhibition visitors. Their engagement with the collages not only made them active participants but also transformed the exhibition space into a dynamic forum, where each visitor contributed their unique perspective to the evolving dialogue about Nicosia.



**ROAD
AHEAD
CLOSED**



Collage inherently produces an image. Although viewers might not experience its making process, its fragmentary nature is often characterised by a sense of 'unfinishedness'. Related to the sequences of collages produced in previous chapters, this fragmentary nature is important to the dialogical potential of collage. Collages can engage the individual's agency through their fragments, fostering an evolving dialogue based on the interaction between these fragments and participants. While the collages presented may appear as final images to participants, their fragmentary nature provides an alternative space that encourages challenging and unexpected interpretations and dialogues. This chapter delves into the mechanisms shaping these dialogues, further exploring collage's potential to facilitate multifaceted conversations.

In this practice-based research, the interplay between myself as a researcher-collagist and my collage work in progress is a vital aspect, related to the sequences discussed in previous chapters. However, this chapter examines how collage, creative practice, and research expression can effectively open up dialogues with others. I investigate this through both the process of creating collages in a space and sharing them with participants. By actively involving participants, I seek to demonstrate the interrelationship between collage and dialogue, and the impact of collage on the creation and understanding of composed images featuring the fragments of contested space.

The research practice is explored within the framework of a curated space, which acts as a testing ground and discussion venue where the research questions are posed to a wider audience. It was contextualised at Newcastle University, in a purpose-built exhibition room, located on the 5th floor of the Henry Daysh Building. Functioning as both a testing ground and a venue for discussion, the exhibition actively engaged with the central research question. It ran for two weeks, during which time 29 individuals visited. The majority of the attendees were adults, encompassing a diverse group of researchers, university students, architects, and artists. The exhibition also unintentionally attracted one child, although it was primarily aimed at an adult audience.

Throughout the exhibition, I maintained an active presence within the space, immersing myself in the experience alongside the participants. This allowed me to not only observe but also engage directly with visitors, fostering meaningful interactions and exchanges of perspectives. In these moments, I seized the opportunity to share my personal insights and reflections on Nicosia, encouraging participants to view the city through the lens of collage. Moreover, the exhibition featured a dedicated area for collage-making, inviting participants to become creators themselves. This interactive component not

only enhanced the overall visitor experience but also served as a catalyst for further exploration and understanding. As participants delved into the creative process, I found myself learning from their diverse perspectives and contributions. These interactions enriched my own creative process, enabling me to produce additional collages inspired by the myriad narratives and interpretations of Nicosia. Thus, the exhibition became not only a showcase of my work but also a dynamic space for dialogue and collaboration, where the boundaries between the agency of collagist-researcher and individual blurred, and new narratives emerged within the rich tapestry of the collaged environment.

The impetus for the preparation of the exhibition was threefold. Firstly, it aimed to create a spatialised collage environment to showcase the practice-based collages produced during this creative research. By creating a dedicated spatialised collage room, the space sought to provide a unique experiential context for the collage in the research context. Secondly, through these spatialised collages, it sought to 'test' the possibility of establishing a dialogue. As a medium characterised by fragmentation, collages can ignite discussions and provoke new perspectives, emphasising the interactive nature of collages as a means of communication. Lastly, this testing aimed to offer a fresh perspective on research practice by revisiting the textual and visual arguments raised in this research before the final composition of this PhD in Architecture by Creative Practice. It served as a platform for testing the underlying concepts and ideas of creative research.

Through discussions related to participants' experiences, this space also examines the process of collage-making and the incidents that occur during the preparation in space, prompting a re-evaluation of the research questions. Moreover, as the exhibition facilitated further discussions, it served as a medium for research, guiding the making and research process, and offering new perspectives on design research. To provide a virtual view of the exhibition space, I created a QR code. Scanning this code allows you to access a digital representation of the space on Google Maps, offering a comprehensive virtual perspective of the exhibition layout and context.¹

Each collage I produced has certain perceptible visual and material features. However, some material aspects, such as colour, texture, and underlying layers, are only fully appreciated by me, the collagist, through tactile and close visual examination during the creative process. In an exhibition, due to participants' inability to watch the exhibits' process of making, I found that they rarely recognised the fragments in the way that I discovered them

1 The QR code shows the exhibition space, enabling readers to view a scanned representation of the exhibition space on Google Maps. This feature was designed to offer an augmented experience of the exhibition, linking the physical and digital realms.

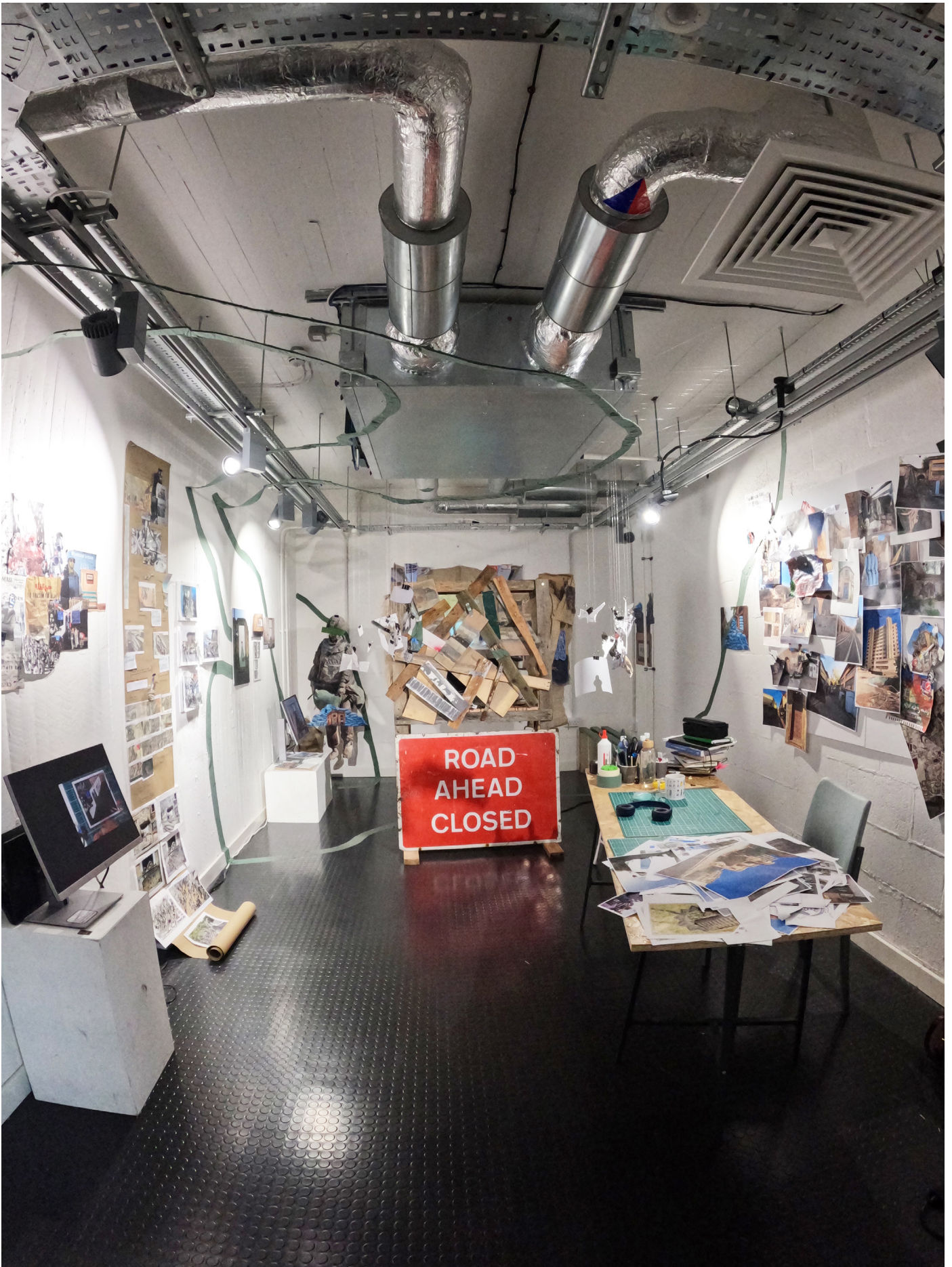


during the process of making. Therefore, this chapter also deals with how participants in an exhibition might perceive the collages, and collaged space, in a specific context. People seem to perceive collages as correlating the works with other things or experiences that they have already acknowledged and stored in their memories. Thus, they perceive constructed images consciously and unconsciously, interpreting them with reference to their personal experiences.

In this chapter, I examine participants' engagement with and interpretation of, the collages shown in the exhibition, which I titled *Cut Nicosia and Re-imagine with Scissors*. Examining participant's interpretations in relation to my own critical reflections has provided a productive medium for working with contested space through the form of specific composed images, and the overall exhibition. Moreover, the presentation of any image within this research as final risks misrepresentation. The preparatory work for the exhibition, comprising compiled collages and fragments, constructed moments, and the diverse interpretations derived from the collages, all have the same status: they are *exploratory*. The exhibition thus becomes a part of this research, but not at the expense of previous works. It represents an experimental exploration of an alternative collage-making technique in physical space.

I will, therefore, explain the process of collage used in the shaping of the exhibition space, in correlation with contested spaces of Nicosia. This requires a re-evaluation of the collages themselves and the design of the spatial environment in which dialogues between them can occur. The creation of this dialogic environment, as the collaging of exhibition space, has been executed within a specific context. This section explains this context through the reflections on the collaging of the space and my personal experience with collage. Subsequently, I delve into how this context is perceived both by me as a collagist-researcher and by the participants. This experience diverges from previous instances of individual collage-making, as it serves as a process through which individuals who were not physically present in the making process can engage with Nicosia and my interpretations of it by observing the fragments, contemplating their thoughts, and being provoked by them.

Similar to the previous collage experiment, my diary and the interpretative voice have also been instrumental in elucidating the experimental process in this chapter. However, different from previous chapters, the diary serves a dual purpose: it not only reflects my experiences as a collagist in the act of collaging the space, but it also serves as a platform for interpreting my dialogues with the participants during the exhibition. Therefore, I will analyse these interactions within the space and present findings on how these dialogues were formed and evolved.



2 - Exhibition Room

Metaphorical meaning of the exhibition context

Every collage work presents a unique story. However, the objective of this exhibition is not merely to present my previous collages or inquire about participants' interpretations. Instead, this testing space immerses participants in a narrative, encouraging dialogues between diverse interpretations and personal experiences. This is done by presenting the exhibition as a central story encompassing many smaller stories within it. By collaging the space, I hope to have created a context that allows for the emergence of the exhibition's own story.

John Dewey, the American philosopher and educator, argued that art engages cognitive and emotional processes, including perception, emotional reactions, and social interaction. According to Dewey, in order to understand the audience, an artist should adopt the attitude of the audience when creating a work so that the audience will try to understand the artist's stance and message.² Drawing upon Dewey, I adopted this approach and thought about the space context that can allow me to understand viewers' experiences in the exhibition. Merleau-Ponty also notes that experiencing an object or event within a specific temporal and spatial context involves perceiving the object through one's senses and embodied perspective, including seeing, hearing, and touching at a particular time and place.³ From his perspective, the experience of the object allows for the perception of the world it represents. By coexisting in the same world as the observed object, one also perceives other objects that exist concurrently, creating a reflective relationship among all objects.

In this light, presenting collages within a specific context can enable participants to establish connections with each other while comprehending the collages in relation to the research's context. Heidegger echoes a similar approach, arguing that what one sees is not just a thing; rather, *the thing*, the thing for doing something in *the space*.⁴ Different fragments within a space can reference one another and thus form a meaningful whole. The process of perceiving an object, a fragment within this collage exhibition, inherently involves an interaction between the individual and the fragment's agency, as well as with agencies between fragments. Therefore, experiencing the collaged space within the context of a narrative can facilitate the perception of this space through bodily and sensory engagement, establishing a mutual relationship and coexistence between the participants and the space.

2 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee, 2005), 48–56.

3 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, International Library of Philosophy and Scientific Method (London, New York: Routledge & Paul; Humanities, 1962), 77–83.

4 Martin Heidegger, *Ontology : The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999), 69–70.

Considering these perspectives, I sought to conceptualise an exhibition theme that would facilitate participants' engagement and enable them to find personal resonances easily. The initial concept was to take participants on a visual journey through Nicosia. To convey this more effectively, I chose the narrative of a "pre-travel exploration of Nicosia". I aimed to construct the exhibition using fragmented stories that shed light on how we can come to know a place before physically visiting it. My goal was to inspire participants to immerse themselves in the flow of the story and, through their interaction with the collages, gain knowledge, interpret, question, and re-examine in their own way.

The central theme revolves around the "Buffer Zone", which has become a symbol of Nicosia's division. While the Buffer Zone represents the division between the two parts of the island of Cyprus, it also serves as a connection between the distinct regions of North Cyprus and South Cyprus. Therefore, incorporating the representation of the "Buffer Zone" in the exhibition space can also be perceived as a unifying element between my collaged stories, as already presented in chapters 5 and 6. Within the exhibition space, the installation of a continuous green line serves to harmonise the stories depicted in the collages. These collages are presented as chapters, guiding viewers on a visual and experiential journey through the city.

I sought to engage participants in an individual interpretation of the gaps between the collages to stimulate dialogue. To encourage them to actively contribute their voices, I excluded the explanatory text that typically accompanies the collages in the exhibition, with the exception of a research description provided in the exhibition introduction. I thus hoped to engage participants in conversation with myself, sitting there in the room. By omitting explanatory text, I also aimed to circumvent predetermined perspectives or interpretations imposed on participants, encouraging diverse perspectives to emerge. This approach fosters an open-ended environment, shaped by the viewer's individual standpoint. Moreover, the intentional absence of written text in the space helped me to analyse how the interplay between collages and fragments unfolds for participants.

The exhibition context can also be viewed as an intervention in the participants' experience. I did not seek to persuade viewers to perceive the collages in the same way as I do as a collagist, nor to create a shared experience between the viewers and myself. On the contrary, the primary purpose of this testing space was to encourage diverse interpretations. This enables participants to interpret the fragments based on their own ideas while simultaneously recognising their involvement in a research context. In other words, they can blend their own interpretations with the context. Nevertheless, despite my efforts to avoid manipulating the

participants' experience when conceptualising the space and the collages, the presentation of the narrative in a sequential manner could be perceived as a guiding experience. This, however, embraced our knowledge and prior experiences shape our perception. Therefore, although there is concern that the research context may influence these interpretations, the uniqueness of each individual's life surpasses these concerns.

Reflecting on the collage sequences produced so far and in light of the theoretical perspectives discussed above, this exhibition can be seen as an alternative space of collage. It embodies a 'collage of space' within the proposed context. The exhibition, similar to the collage sequence in Chapter 4, presents an imaginary Nicosia. However, it moves beyond a flat surface to offer a three-dimensional experience. In this way, the process of creating the exhibition itself becomes an act of collaging space. This approach allows participants to experience the gaps between fragments, not just in their minds but in the tangible space of the exhibition. As a result, the space itself transforms into a collage space, with participants becoming an active part of the reverie of Nicosia. When viewers move through the fragments in this space, they not only develop their own interpretations, shaped by their collage experiences, but also engage deeply with the notion of an imaginary Nicosia.

The process of collaging the space

Unlike the processes of collage-making discussed in the previous chapters, the installation of this space became a collage-making process itself. Thus, while collages produced in previous chapters engaged with Cyprus' and Nicosia's history, texture, and contested situation as a collagist, this chapter centres on collage production as a research technique. Within the exhibition, space was transformed into a thematic narrative where collages - sub-stories - created about Nicosia are collaged as a coherent whole. This section elucidates the experience of making a collage within a Nicosia-centric context. In addition to exhibiting the sequences of collages produced in previous chapters, additional collages and fragments have been created to complement the space's narrative during the preparation of the space, linking these collages together and providing an explanatory context for the research.

While collaging the space, I began by planning the primary structure of the exhibition – 'the Buffer Zone' within the space. This approach allowed me to incorporate stories of Nicosia into the space and merge all the collages with the research context. It served as a symbolic link between the different parts of the Buffer Zone in Nicosia, establishing a conceptual connection within the exhibition space. On this foundation, the existing collages and fragments



Green Line Planning

3 - Green Line planning of exhibition room

were placed, transforming the space into a coherent collage. This approach marked the inception of the creative process for this experimental space, which revolved around three main components: *The Basics*, *The Border*, and *Dialogue in the Buffer Zone*.

The Basics provides an overview of the city by delving into its history, map, and texture. The Border focuses on the distinctiveness and limitations of the city, aiming to elucidate its fragmented texture. Dialogue in the Buffer Zone, conversely, is centred on the potential of dialogue and provides an interactive space for the participants to engage and share their thoughts about the exhibition. These components were thoughtfully incorporated within the exhibition room, symbolically referencing their respective research subjects, *collage* and *the divided city of Nicosia*.

The Basics

The first component, 'The Basics', begins with the incorporation of the green line, which serves to unite all the stories. This green line is constructed using an orthographic drawing of a 1:250 scale map of the Buffer Zone that forms the dividing line of Nicosia. I applied this line to connect all the surfaces within the exhibition space by using a fabric-textured tape that resembles the camouflage tape used by snipers. Spanning from the entrance area, it traverses the room and intersects with other constituent spaces. By following the surfaces throughout the space, this layout helped me to challenge the inherent two-dimensionality of the collages applied on the walls and offered an interactive and immersive three-dimensional exploration of Nicosia. This first component, which has come to symbolise the separation on the island, also became a route that enables participants to position themselves within the collaged space and locate the two sub-components. [3]

This first component also integrates the historical, cultural, social, and political aspects that have shaped the city. These collages serve as a foundation for exploring a series of intricate material exchanges within the city's texture. The exhibition begins with a collaged map that depicts the walled city of Nicosia. It serves as both an invitation to the space and a means of exploration. The initial section of this collaged map focuses on telling the first story about the city and exploring its texture. The upper part of the green line featured a collaged fragment representing the Arabahmet neighbourhood, known as an immigrant enclave within North Nicosia. Simultaneously, military fragments were strategically juxtaposed along the green line, while the lower portion of the line referred to Eleftheria Square, a significant point where the Venetian walls of South Nicosia converge after the period of division. [4]

Moving forward along this symbolic green line in the space, I sought to encapsulate the intricate details of the city through the juxtaposition of



4 - Entrance of Exhibition Room

fragmented elements. I positioned a collaged booklet entitled “Nicosia Guide” near the map. In contrast to its original purpose, this literary work deviates from its conventional role as a means of introducing the city through written text. Instead, it offers visitors tantalising hints about the city through collaged fragments extracted from its pages. This fragmentary composition provides profound insights into various aspects of the city, including its divided nature, distinctive texture, and intricate social, political, and cultural landscape. Furthermore, it seeks to evoke a profound sense of ‘visiting the city’ within the visitors themselves, employing a visual exploration that allows them to connect with the city even before experiencing it first-hand. [5]

The ‘Nicosia Guide’ is followed by a collage composition that attempts to explain the controversial past of Cyprus. Serving as a reconfiguration of the collages previously introduced in Chapter 3, this composition initially presents a fragmentary exploration of the city’s history, ranging from its transition from Ottoman rule to becoming a British colony up to the establishment of the border crossing point in 2003. Presented without any accompanying written explanation, this collage tries to provide an insightful perspective into the city’s contested past, incorporating controversial fragments to offer an insightful perspective that deviates from a definitive and unalterable historical narrative.

After the historical collage section, the first component culminates in an exploratory story of the spaces on the border. This series illustrates four imaginary moments from the city. As a base of this collage series, I used the photographs of abandoned spaces on the border I took during my exploration along the Nicosia border. Atop these images lie additional collage layers using transparent sheets, reconstructing the vitality that once animated these abandoned spaces. Transparent collaged sheets are incorporated into the foundation of these photographs, enabling glimpses into the underlying layers and fostering an interactive exploration of the composition. By collaging images capturing the abandoned spaces of the border buildings, these collages invite the viewer to journey back to a bygone era when life was once active in these spaces. By engaging with the collages, participants are encouraged to prompt contemplation of the prevailing abandonment state that permeates this area.

The Border

The second component of the space materialises a part of the division depicted on the map, drawing inspiration from the northern part of the division line in Nicosia. This component, called the ‘Closed Window’, serves as a convergence point for various methods, techniques, representations, and phenomena explored during the design of the showcased collage works



5 - Nicosia Guide

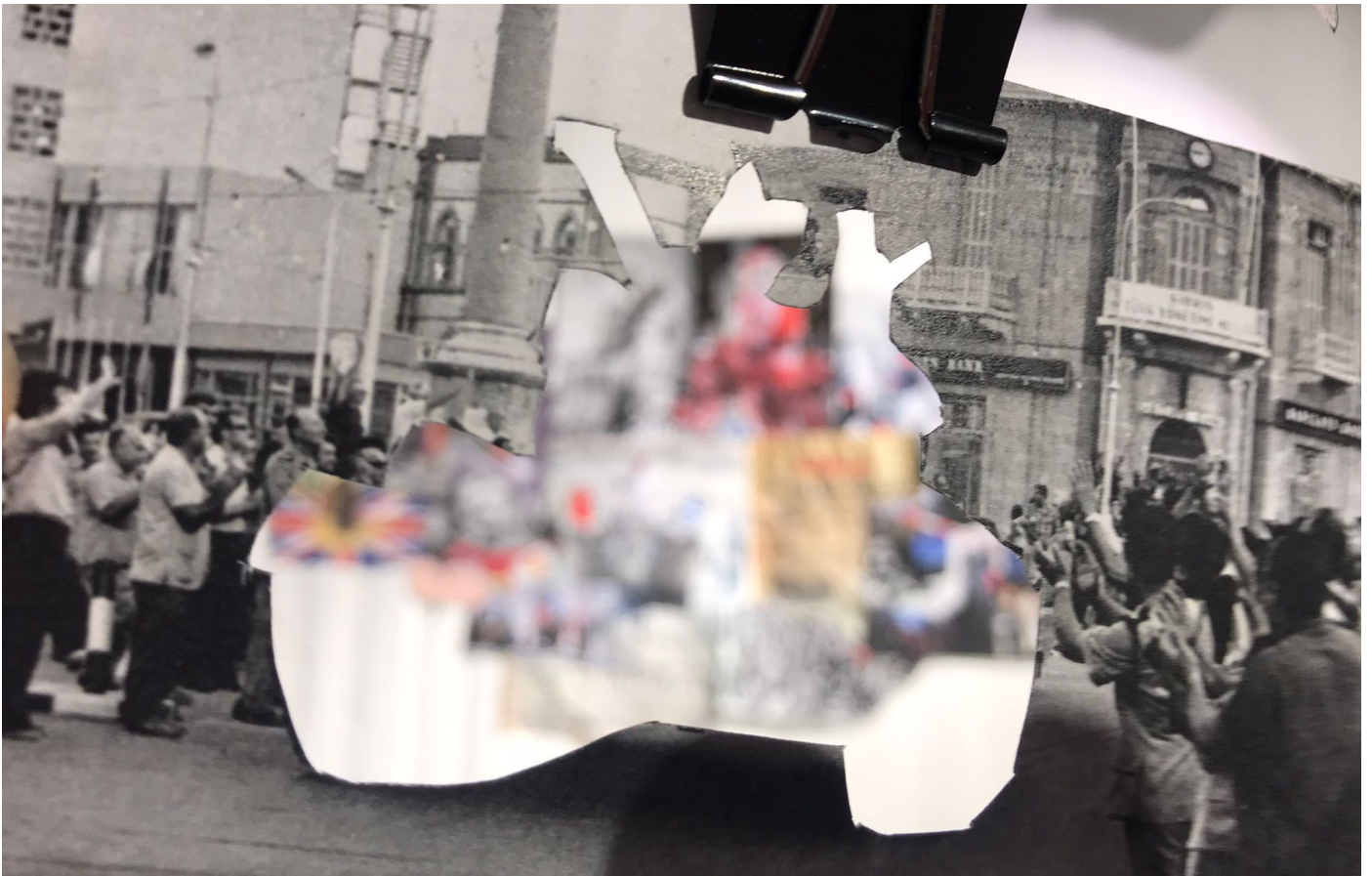


6 - First part of exhibition space

in this exhibition. As participants follow the path of 'the Buffer Zone', they encounter a space characterised by fragments. These fragments symbolise the texture of division experienced along the Buffer Zone and create a partially permeable area, reminiscent of the spaces above the Buffer Zone where buildings are adorned with found materials that delineate the boundary. Furthermore, this space assumes a form that restricts physical passage while its perforated structure allows observation of what lies beyond. Positioned behind this space are moments of collage creation continuously projected onto a fixed image, offering active glimpses of the fragmented state beyond. The intricate materiality of this component and its intersection within the space, in relation to the 'situated' section of the first component, establish an interactive relationship. Moreover, it invites a symbolic interpretation of the harsh reality of division in Nicosia.

In the first section of this component, the initial fragmented images, presented as hanging fragments to indicate a three-dimensional form, were gradually re-presented as a unified view and impression through the fragmented openings within this structure and the movement of the participants. This dynamic interaction interplayed the transformative nature of collage and encouraged participants to reflect on the multifaceted dimensions of division and unity. In this experience, as participants traversed the delimited space, they were able to observe the fragments within it and perceive the space in diverse ways through these fragments. For instance, one of the hanging pieces consisted of a fragment of a battle tank extracted from an image. One could see the composition of the contested past of the city through the gap of this fragment. It impacted the space's interpretation as it limited the participants' perspective. Therefore, this initial space positions itself both within the research practice of collage and within the collaged space of imaginary Nicosia. [7-8]

Following the preceding phase of fragmentary exploration, the subsequent section of the exhibition draws inspiration from the intricate border situation in Nicosia. This part manifests as a collaged space symbolising the physical demarcation itself. While delineating the border zone, the division line was traced by the buildings on Hermes Street while simultaneously employing salvaged materials to seal off apertures within the boundary. In the exhibition space, this construction not only portrays the porous nature of the Nicosia border but also accentuates the dichotomy between restriction and revelation. Within this section, a conspicuous red 'road ahead closed' sign serves as a powerful visual marker of prohibition, while the gaps offer a tantalising glimpse into the realm beyond. [9] Adjacent to this spatial construct, a video installation showcases always-changing collage compositions. On the adjoining wall, a fixed image portrays a composite representation of the border's interior, portraying residential structures flanking both sides and



7 - Hanging fragment



8 - Seeing through hanging fragment





10 - Watching through the border

Hermes Street. An allegorical figure of a soldier can be discerned traversing this street, adding a layer of irony to the scene. Notably, this collage image undergoes a continuous metamorphosis throughout the dynamic video collage. Within this experiential framework, participants not only bear witness to the ever-evolving panorama of collage moments captured on screen but also encounter a distinct collage tableau through each aperture punctuating the collaged structure.

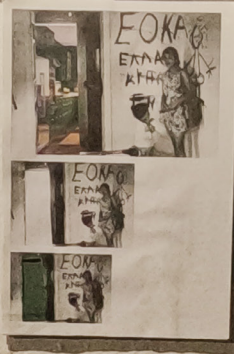
Dialogues in The Buffer Zone

The third component is an area representing the no-man zone between North Nicosia and South Nicosia. Within this space, the participants actively engage as a fragment in the collage. This immersive encounter integrates the participants into the dimension of time and space, emphasising their internalisation and fostering an active interpretation of the dialogue. This dialogue unfolds not only from the collages to the participants but also from the participants to the collages.

As a part of this component, there is a bench symbolising the dialogical space. Its conceptual genesis is inspired by a bench adorned with a 'peace' sign, an iconic symbol in South Nicosia, particularly as it relates to traversing the Ledra Palace border crossing point. While I cannot resolve the problems of the divided city, the evocative collages prominently feature visual representations that resonate with the contextual backdrop under scrutiny.

Opposite the seating area, a section of the 'Buffer Zone' is demarcated with sniper camouflage tape and associated collages. These collages, designed to transcend the fragmented nature of previous works, employ deliberate cuts and omissions to create intentional gaps within the composition. Images of closed doors and windows from buildings in the Buffer Zone, combined with green tape, become part of this 'Buffer Zone' representation, offering an unending perspective. They aim to foster polyphonic thoughts, with complex perspective drawings guiding the participant's gaze on a visual journey without a definitive endpoint, thereby creating a space where diverse perspectives converge in the participant's mind.

This section also serves as a discussion room within the collaged space. It is where thoughts provoked in the alternative space of the collage are expected to evolve into conversations. Echoing Woods' concept of free space, or the 'alternative space of collage' described in the previous chapter, this room offers a judgment-free zone, shaped by the participants' thoughts. In the absence of explanatory text, this space encourages participants to listen to their own thoughts and form their own interpretations in the Buffer Zone full of ambiguities and gaps. Situated metaphorically and literally within the Buffer Zone of Nicosia, this space seeks to offer a reflective environment



following the exhibition visit. Here, participants can blend what they have learned or thought about during the exhibition with their own ideas, leading to a personal interpretation of the collaged space. In other words, this space is testing the alternative space of collage in collaged space.

Site-specific collage-making

Although this is a testing space for research with a specific plan and context, the curation of the space led me to create site-specific collages. I planned the space to explore the dialogical potential of the collages before the exhibition. However, upon experiencing these collages in the space, I realised that the space itself could also be collaged, enriching the context with fragments of Nicosia. Therefore, while some initial decisions were made before the exhibition installation, many components were shaped throughout the creative process of inhabiting the room. This process was inspired by Kurt Schwitters' Merzbau and, indeed, Peter Kellett's exhibition⁵ previously curated in this space. Both of these examples can be seen as organically growing and collaged spaces. When viewing the fragments of these exhibitions individually, the fragments on display may appear disparate and unrelated, but they present a process of composition.

6- From the exhibition diary, 25 April 2022. I started setting up a green line in the testing space. Initially, this seemed like a straightforward task. However, I encountered a slight issue when the line reached the ceiling, as the ceiling surface was not completely flat. I had to come up with an alternative method to apply the line to the uneven ceiling. After some thought, I decided to cut the line from cardboard and cover it with tape. Although this solved the problem of the uneven surface, it presented another challenge. Due to the scale of the drawing, the line would cover a large area, and instead of representing the all-area as a surface, I decided to define its boundaries like a frame. Moreover, I faced another obstacle as the line couldn't be directly hung from the ceiling. Thankfully, the exhibition space had a metal frame hanging from the ceiling, which let me create an alternative solution. I used fishing lines to hang the line from the metal frame. However, I must admit that I'm not entirely satisfied with the process and its outcome. Although the line has a striking effect, with captivating colours and textures, unfortunately, as the line reached the ceiling, it lost its impact. It seems that I need to reconsider the decisions I made regarding the placement and execution of the green line.

Before starting the collage-making, I attempted to envision how the collages would appear in the actual space by placing them on drawings of the room. After finalising these preliminary decisions, I tried to observe their impact in actual space. Key decisions were the placement of a green line, an entrance map of Nicosia, a collage depicting the history of Nicosia, and a 'peace' bench intended to foster dialogue. However, displaying these works alone within the space fell short of creating the desired atmosphere, which prompted me to explore a more comprehensive exhibition context.⁶

I first focused on creating the green line within the testing space. While I achieved the visually striking effect I had envisioned, the impact was diminished as it reached the ceiling due to an increase in the gap of the green line. Drawing inspiration from Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*,⁷ I contemplated how this particular area could be transformed into a more engaging and relevant space for visitors. Echoing Lefebvre's notion of space, "as a tool for thought

5 Architect and social anthropologist Peter Kellett curated a farewell exhibition marking his retirement between 17th of February and 13th of March 2020 in the Room 6.06 in the Henry Daysh Building, Newcastle upon Tyne. To see the exhibition please scan QR code.

7 H. Lefebvre, "The Production of Space," *The Production of Space*, 1991.



and action”,⁸ I imagined how a collagist creates space and the fragments within it by considering the interrelationship between the fragments in relation to the whole.

I thought about how a participant can walk around fragments and scrutinise them not in a single aspect but in relation to the whole space. Inspired by Lefebvre, I decided to incorporate the fragments initially used for the green line into this area while contemplating how to direct participants' attention towards the ceiling. However, instead of placing them directly above the green line, I opted to suspend these fragments from the top using a fishing line which created a feeling of flying fragments. As the green line extended, the fragments trailing along it created a corridor-like effect in the three-dimensional space. This configuration not only influenced the participants' perception of the space but also facilitated serendipitous experiences. Their interplay with the collaged space created an ever-changing structure. As participants traversed this space, they were afforded glimpses of the exhibition through the gaps between the fragments, allowing them to perceive the traces of Nicosia through the frames and encounter playful impressions created by the shadows cast by these fragments. I named this particular area the '*seeing through fragments*' zone.⁹

While contemplating how to incorporate the border, a prominent element of the 'Closed Window' component, into a three-dimensional experience, the idea of constructing a platform emerged. This platform was inspired by a photograph captured during my visit to Nicosia. It refers to the perforated fabric of the border in the divided city. Thus, I used the found materials to create this platform and placed a "Road Ahead Closed" sign that I had previously abandoned. Although the platform itself may not hold a clear message, together with the red sign, it provides a strong reflection and gives the participants the feeling of approaching the division border. Therefore, I strategically placed it directly opposite the gate within the viewers' main line of sight upon entering the exhibition, emphasising the contested nature of Nicosia.¹⁰

This platform had a porous structure and allowed for a view behind it. Contemplating this spatial arrangement, I realised that I could also create an impression here based on what I call '*seeing through fragments*'. This experience brought back memories of Nicosia, where I was able to see the 'Buffer Zone' through the gaps on the border. Prompted by this recollection, I resolved to make a collage

9- From the exhibition diary, 26 April 2022.

I placed the green line, the map at the entrance, and the collages I had created depicting Nicosia's past. Despite these additions, the exhibition space still felt lacking in atmosphere. I needed to find a way to breathe life into this space. Upon observing the green frame on the ceiling, I couldn't help but feel that it lacked dimension within the space. It seemed rather flat and unremarkable. As I was in the process of hanging the green line, a sudden realisation struck me. I could experiment with transparent threads to add a new dimension to the installation. Though uncertain about what exactly I would hang using these threads, I focused on the potential they held. My goal was to create a sense of depth and intrigue, not solely on what I hung but on the idea of hanging itself. I wanted to transform the space to create an immersive corridor-like experience using various random pieces. Then, perhaps due to the interplay of lighting or the varying weights of each suspended piece, the area seemed to come alive, transforming into floating fragments that cast enchanting shadows on the walls, creating a connection with the collages on the wall. What's even more captivating is that, within this space composed of leftover fragments, I discovered that the previously cut pieces allowed glimpses of other areas of the exhibition. This unexpected discovery provided an alternative perspective for experiencing the exhibition, adding an element of intrigue and exploration.

10 - From the exhibition diary, 27 April 2022.

While hanging one of the pieces from the ceiling, I stumbled upon a fragment of a photograph I had taken during my time in Nicosia. It immediately gave me the idea of creating this type of limit in the exhibition space. Then, I decided to incorporate this fragment into space, aiming to convey the sense of boundary and limitation that I wanted to evoke within the exhibition. Luckily, I encountered a "Road Ahead Closed" sign on my way to the office. Instantly, I knew that I had to borrow it for the duration of my exhibition. The sign seemed to carry a symbolism, resonating with the concept I was exploring. In Nicosia, one can come across numerous signs, each warning of a different prohibition or restriction. These signs serve as reminders of the closed borders and the divisions that exist within the city. Reflecting on this, I realised that showcasing a section in my exhibition that emphasises the closure of borders, alongside the sign indicating a border, could have a powerful impact on the viewers. It could evoke in them the same sense of contemplation and awareness that I experienced while navigating the streets of Nicosia.

8 Lefebvre, 124–25.

11- From the exhibition diary, 28 April 2022. As I completed the installation of the platform, something intriguing caught my attention. The hollow structure of the platform allowed me to see through it, reminiscent of an experience I had in Nicosia. It was a moment of realisation that the space behind the platform held great potential for collage, just like the glimpses I had caught through openings in the border. Although unsure about how to approach collaging this wall, I decided to weave together a narrative about the border and its inner workings based on my own experiences. When I peered through the holes in the border, I witnessed buildings shrouded in greenery, almost on the verge of collapse. Yet, amidst the ruins, military markers and flags adorned the area, indicating its restricted access for soldiers only. Through this glimpse, the border felt incredibly close, perhaps only three or four meters away. It struck me that I wanted to convey this experience to the viewers, to evoke the same sense of curiosity and questioning that arises when encountering such a closely positioned border for the first time. Drawing from my personal encounters, I aimed to reflect upon the complexity of the border and the emotions it elicits.

12 - From the exhibition diary, 29 April 2022. I created a platform. The design of this bench was inspired by the crossing point in South Nicosia. However, when I placed it in the exhibition space, I felt that something was missing. Despite placing a "peace" sign on the wall adjacent to the bench, I'm uncertain about the intended impact of this particular section. It is supposed to be a 'dialogical space' - 'an alternative space' but how? As I sit on the bench, I find myself enclosed within a limited space formed by the platform and the collage I made on the wall. Yet, when I gaze directly ahead, there exists a vast gap. In order to reach this space, I must confront that gap. Recognising the potential significance of this wall, I pondered the types of thoughts that should blend harmoniously here, although uncertainty still lingers. However, if this exhibition aims to provide an experiential journey to acquaint visitors with a city, I believe that imagination should play a more prominent role at this juncture, surpassing mere learning and knowing. Irrespective of the extent of my research on a city prior to my visit, I attempt to position myself by scrutinising the images I encounter and enlivening them within my imagination through my own life experiences. Thus, while seated on this bench, I contemplate the fragments and, as the culminating experience of this exhibition, I can invite viewers to envision how they perceive Nicosia or their experience within this exhibition. Yet, I still have doubts about the most effective approach to making collages for this wall.

upon the exposed wall, visible through the platform's interstices, thereby evoking a semblance of Nicosia's border texture. The specific contents of this collage were of lesser consequence; my aim lay in engendering a perceptual manifestation akin to the border's texture. Using the sandbag material used to cover the gaps in the border, I created a texture on the wall and placed buildings representing the two sides of the border. The fragments of national flags adorning these structures allowed discernment of which part the structures belong. As a testament to the militaristic nature of the zone, I positioned a fragment depicting a soldier between the two structures, facilitating the participant's recognition of this as a military zone. To enhance the visual impact, I incorporated outstretched arms protruding from the windows of both buildings, with fingertips nearly touching, alluding to Michelangelo's hands. The underlying message I endeavoured to convey was that, despite its division, Nicosia remained interconnected through the border. Moreover, in reference to the shifting texture of the collage, I projected an ongoing video of the collage making on this collage, which, like the fragmentation of the shadows that I noticed by chance in the previous section, gave this collage a fluid and ever-changing structure. I called this section 'watching through fragments'.¹¹

The final destination along the testing space is reached by following the designated green line, leading to a platform in the referred area indicated as the 'Dialogue in The Buffer Zone' component in the planning. Following the green line involves initially crossing the platform, then progressing along the active collage displayed on the wall behind the platform, and finally encountering a 'peace' bench. However, during my personal experience of this process and while seated on the bench, I realised that the wall in front of me could serve as a space to initiate actual dialogues.¹² Contemplating the creation of a collage for this wall, I decided to make collages centred around the theme of 'seeing/imagining beyond the border,' drawing inspiration from my own experiences during my trip to Nicosia. The intricate political complexities of Cyprus rendered physical border crossing impossible for me. Hence, I leveraged the advantages of collage at this juncture, assembling my thoughts on this possibility. This collage experience aimed to reflect the concealed aspects of Nicosia and evoke speculation regarding the unknown future of the city, all within a fragmented structure.¹³

Within this section, four collages were showcased: two primary collages intimately linked to the green line and two central collages that directly reference Nicosia's contested past to remind the situation. The main collages constitute a direct reinterpretation of the closed doors that were closed to establish the border. They were reinterpretations of my collages for the Chapter 4 collage-making experiment. In both of these collages, I cut out the fragments of the doors and incorporated perspective drawings within the gaps of these fragments, evoking a tunnel-like effect. Then, I covered the base of this tunnel-like perspective drawing with the same green tape, establishing a visual connection between the collages and the mapped route. I also added the soldier fragments to these collages, reminding them that it is a militarised and restricted space. However, gaps in these images allow its participants to form their own interpretations of Nicosia.

On the other hand, the other two collages in this composition served as reminders of the connection between the primary collages and Nicosia's troubled history. Although my primary intention was not to evoke emotions through these collages, I observed that the collages featuring human fragments, using the same technique, naturally elicited stronger emotional responses, amplifying the tragic aspects of the past. The first of these emotionally charged collages involved the removal of windows from an image capturing a building within the no-man's zone. A sense of depth was achieved by incorporating a perspective drawing within the resulting gap, accompanied by silhouettes of people positioned between the drawing and the window fragments. The second collage portrayed the door of a room where a family had tragically perished during the war. Just outside the doorway were a woman and her child, with the name of the Greek-Cypriot terrorist organisation, EOKA, prominently displayed on the wall behind them - a supportive group of the war at that time. Similarly, I created a gap in this collage by cutting out the door fragment. However, I sought to explore diverse possibilities and convey to viewers the notion of envisioning alternative outcomes. To achieve this, I prepared three alternatives. First, I introduced a perspective drawing in the door fragment; second, I inserted an image of a kitchen within the gap. This juxtaposition presented a thought-provoking contrast. While the graffiti alluded to the tumultuous past, the depiction of a newly built kitchen suggested that the fragmented remnants of history can be rebuilt, erasing the scars of war. In the third alternative, I used green tape to cover the gap of this door, which allowed me

13 - From the exhibition diary, 2 May 2022. During the process of creating a collage for the wall facing the bench, I drew inspiration from the collages I had previously done, "Olympus Hotel." I believe that by employing its techniques, I can establish a "what if or how do you think" section here. I endeavoured to style a collage that embodies Nicosia, incorporating elements such as the green line, dimensional gaps, and grid drawings. The intention was to create a collage that provokes manifold thoughts about Nicosia. ...I sought to contemplate the future, the tomorrow while remaining cognizant of the past and the events that have transpired. To achieve this, I focused on two primary collages that directly relate to the green line encompassing the exhibition space. The remaining two collages possess a more dramatic quality, capable of evoking introspection concerning both the art of collage and the contentious history of Nicosia. Perhaps this section could accommodate more collages, or a solitary image might suffice. Making this decision proves challenging. ...Nevertheless, I am exhilarated by the gradual transformation of this area into a chaotic collage. Therefore, it is my hope that viewers can find solace in this section, allowing themselves to unwind, immerse and feel a bit personal in a serene ambience, fully aware of the intricate details before them.

14 - From the exhibition diary, 3 May 2022. Today, I find myself somewhat disheartened as I continue my research on ways to reach South Cyprus. The ongoing political turmoil has rendered visiting South Cyprus nearly impossible, if not entirely so. Consequently, fuelled by this frustration, I yearned to infuse a more personal touch into this exhibition, to offer a perspective that stems from my own experiences... I decided to incorporate elements from the travel guide I had meticulously planned for myself. The collaged map displayed at the entrance provides a glimpse into the offerings of Nicosia. In the historical part, numerous hints about the contentious history of the region can be found. However, what else does a tourist need to know? Especially if one possesses a Turkish background or holds solely a Turkish passport, it becomes imperative to prepare for a journey to South Cyprus. Unfortunately, bureaucratic hurdles complicate matters unnecessarily, including visas, permits, and various documents. Nevertheless, this issue is not limited to my personal circumstances alone. Cyprus itself is a contested island, housing two nations—some refer to them as “so-called” two nations—within its borders. Hence, the first step is to thoroughly familiarise oneself with the regulations before making any plans, particularly when it concerns “Cyprus.” Assuming there are no hindrances, the remainder of the journey becomes a joyous affair... Security naturally becomes a foremost concern for every tourist. Drawing from my experiences in North Cyprus, I remain uncertain as to whose safety the omnipresent cameras serve. However, I suppose such levels of border protection are commonplace in many countries. Yet, this fails to alleviate the perpetual sense of being observed and monitored. Moreover, the fact that I was personally shadowed and cautioned while travelling in areas near the border only heightened this sentiment. Nonetheless, once one overcomes these bureaucratic obstacles, the journey becomes a matter of personal preference. I believe that the Walled City itself is a must-see, along with areas like the project by Zaha Hadid Architects and the refugee quarters, among other attractions.

to create a cohesive composition for these collages.

Finally, upon revisiting the exhibition space, I endeavoured to create a collage that would further personalise the narrative. Alongside the collage compositions in the Buffer Zone component, which has included the map of Nicosia and the events of its contested past, I sought to make a collage that would enhance the participants' experiential understanding of the city through a visual narrative. At the beginning of the exhibition, the first composition, the collaged map of Nicosia, presented a multitude of narratives regarding the city's division and situation. However, in order to convey more explicitly that this exhibition process offers an opportunity to acquaint oneself with the city and that this process unfolds through a visual narrative, I set out to create a collage that could be understood in a more ironic yet simplistic manner.¹⁴

Personally, before visiting a city, I begin by conducting simple research. I peruse photographs of the city and read people's comments. In this exhibition experience, I sought to provide the participants with an initial encounter by sharing a more personal interpretation. For this collage, I commenced by analysing a city guide intended for tourists visiting before the opening of the border gates. Although much of the information presented therein about the restrictions imposed by division in the city has since changed, the new regulations and points of attention were still akin. The recommended sites to visit in the city were added, while certain locations underwent renovations, deviating from their depictions in the guide. Despite these differences, the historical section remained pertinent. For this collage, I decided to compose this collage by creating fragments resembling bookends, symbolising the notes I had taken about myself before visiting the city.

First and foremost, I wanted to allude to the documents required for entering the city - bearing in mind that it is a divided city and not all passports have a right to cross the border. I labelled this piece 'Check the limits of your passport'. Moreover, I examined the restricted areas of the city, which naturally instilled security concerns. Drawing from my personal experience in Nicosia, many locations are off-limits due to their positioning within military zones. However, the border and its immediate surroundings are partly accessible, albeit heavily shrivelled by cameras. While this provided a sense of safety against theft as a tourist, it also evoked a feeling of being under constant observation. Hence, I aimed to portray this

irony by incorporating eye fragments onto camera fragments and fashioning a soldier figure using one of these fragments as a head. I called this collaged composition "Security!"

After summarising the bureaucratic and political circumstances, I shifted my focus towards the aspects of the city that piqued my curiosity. I created fragments representing the places I yearned to explore. One such fragment depicts Selimiye Mosque, repurposed for that use and situated in the northern part of the divided city, which formerly served as a Christian cathedral known as the Cathedral of Saint Sophia. Another fragment portrays Eleftheria Square, located in the southern part of the city. This square stands as a historical symbol which has been revitalised through a project designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, thereby assuming a distinct identity within the city fabric. Additionally, I concluded this composition by incorporating a few fragments referencing history.

As a result, the process, spanning from space preparation to collage production, has undergone a profound transformation in both purpose and nature, resulting in the emergence of a site-specific collage-making process. By seamlessly integrating the act of collage-making within the testing space and merging it with pre-arranged collage fragments, the boundaries of traditional exhibition conventions are surpassed. This approach enables the direct presentation of collages and establishes the testing space as an immersive environment for exploration and experimentation. The immersive experience of collage-making in space, enriched by the inclusion of both previous and newly created collages, illuminates the vast potential of this creative medium in shaping and defining spatial contexts. Thus, this experimental endeavour not only underscores the intrinsic power of collage as a powerful tool for creative expression but also invites further investigation into its multidimensional influence on spatial design.

Experiments in space with participants

After the exhibition was set up, the space was made accessible to participants for a duration of two weeks. Traditional norms dictate that physical contact with the work on show is generally prohibited in most exhibitions. However, here, in this testing space, I deliberately avoided imposing such restrictions. Instead, I tried to encourage participants to engage in tactile exploration, urging them to touch and physically experience the textures and hidden layers within the collages. And, at the end of the space, I positioned a table for myself to work on collages.¹⁵ Adjacent to this area, I provided materials and invited visitors to join me in making collages either individually or collaboratively. This creative, experimental production fostered opportunities for dialogue, enabling participants to engage in discussions with me regarding

15 - From exhibition diary, 4 May 2022. After nearly completing the exhibition space, I recognised the need for a designated area where I could position myself. However, rather than merely waiting for participants to approach me, I envisioned this space as an interactive setting where they could observe my work and potentially join in if they wished. Given that I couldn't predict precisely when they would feel inclined to engage in conversation, I sought to transform this space into an active collage-making process rather than a passive waiting area. This thought stemmed from the possibility of creating collages with others. Additionally, as I had been primarily focused on research-oriented collage-making, collaborating with individuals could provide fresh perspectives and insights into my own creative process... Nevertheless, I decided to position this area as an experimental possibility rather than a formal research method. While collage-making has been frequently employed as a research tool in participatory studies, the primary emphasis of this research lies not in what collaborative collage-making can yield but rather in exploring the extent to which it can enhance my individual research. However, I viewed it as an opportunity to foster intimate conversations if participants were interested and to glean insights from their unique experiences... To facilitate this, I placed a table near the entrance, strategically positioned along the final route of the exhibition experience and stocked with the necessary materials for collage-making. This space can be regarded as a form of performance art, integrating into my research, as well as a platform for conversation during the collage-making process. It is an entirely experimental endeavour designed to complement the overall nature of this research exhibition, which embodies an experimental approach in every aspect.

16 - From the exhibition diary, 09 May 2022. As I continued working on my collage, I noticed a girl who had passed by the corridor multiple times. She seems intrigued by the exhibition space and will attempt to catch glimpses of what lies inside through the door. Although uncertain if she would enter, she has been studying the map displayed at the entrance for some time, attempting to decipher the importance of the space by peering through the gaps in the collaged door.

- 16 May 2022 from the exhibition diary. The person who I think has an office on this floor has been standing by the collage at the entrance for a few days, exchanging brief greetings with me before swiftly moving on. I wonder when she will come back... And here she is. She stated that she wanted to come for a few days and only found the time and shared a few thoughts about the collage at the door...

their interpretations of the collages and the overall space. Participants expressed their thoughts on intricate details, sharing their experiences of making collages using the provided fragments.

The first encounter for participants was the entrance wall of the exhibition space, which featured a collaged map depicting part of Nicosia, accompanied by a collage-based explanation of the research context. This piqued the curiosity of many participants, asking them to stop and contemplate the interior of the exhibition.¹⁶ Notably, before entering the main space, many participants spent time in this specific area, engaging with the layered elements I incorporated into the door window in an attempt to comprehend the space beyond.

Since this exhibition focused on the dialogical potential of collage, there was no explanatory text, with the exception of the introductory text elucidating the research context at the entrance. Moreover, no structured forms or questionnaires were provided to elicit specific participant feedback. Instead, the intention was to cultivate an atmosphere where the participants would feel free to share their thoughts and experiences with me directly due to their genuine interest in the collage fragments. Hence, the exhibition trusted in the potential for an organic exchange of ideas to emerge naturally. Throughout the exhibition, a total of thirty visitors from diverse backgrounds engaged with the space.¹⁷ While some participants stayed only briefly, others joined me and spent up to an hour immersed in the collaged space, engrossed in creating collages and engaging in discussions about the technique. Importantly, each participant discovered something to share and expressed no hesitation in doing so. Their contributions encompassed a range of topics, including reflections on Nicosia, observations on the fragments, thoughts on the exhibition space itself, concerns about research practice, and even personal life experiences.

Through my interactions and dialogues with the exhibition participants, I discovered that they were able to read the stories I tried to express through collages. Moreover, their relationships with the space were shaped by diverse perspectives and individual interests. By providing them with the freedom to express their opinions openly, I observed a positive influence on their engagement, as they willingly shared their thoughts and feelings, particularly in relation to their personal emotions and experiences. These

¹⁷ The exhibition aimed to attract a diverse group of adult visitors, with no specific restrictions imposed. Invitations were primarily distributed through university email lists, targeting individuals with an interest in creative practice and contested space research across various disciplines. The exhibition's location on the 5th floor of the HDB (student affairs floor) also drew in some incidental visitors. Of the 29 attendees, most were adults, including researchers, university students, artists, and architects. Notably, the exhibition was not designed for children, though one child did attend unintentionally.

exchanges and dialogues showed the breadth of viewpoints and feedback received, highlighting the dynamic and subjective nature of each participant's experience. This reinforced the potential of the collage exhibition to generate multifaceted insights and reflections.

All participants provided comments on various aspects of the exhibition, focusing on their impressions of Nicosia and the insights they gained about the city through the exhibition. They shared their queries about the city, their experiences with the collage-making process, and personal anecdotes and immediate reactions. Some participants found deep meaning in the collage imagery, relating it to their own life stories. Others viewed the exhibition space as a collage itself, with a focus on specific elements like fragmented images, colours, or textures to interpret their meanings.

Notably, while some agreed with my perspective that the exhibition and collage-making are intriguing and experiential research methods, others raised questions and concerns about the exhibition's contribution to research. Academically oriented participants were drawn to the research aspect, eager to understand the complexities behind the displayed works. In contrast, those from non-academic backgrounds concentrated on interpreting the collage fragments and extracting meanings from them. For instance, an architecture PhD student expressed interest in the exhibition but sought clarity on the research methodology. Another academic from the same field had similar inquiries, wanting to understand not just the individual pieces but also the overall research rationale, the sources used, and the links between the photographs and collected data.

Participants from diverse fields like geography, design, archaeology, medicine, and landscape architecture initially focused on the collage fragments and the combined space. They then engaged in dialogue, sharing their thoughts and reflections on the exhibition. I regarded these interpretations as research material, analysing them to explore the potential of collage in contested spaces within this design-based research. For better understanding, I have categorised the dialogues into three types: reactional; evocative; and instructive interpretations.

The 'reactional' group included comments that conveyed the immediate feelings or experiences of participants with the collages and the collaged space. For example, one participant highlighted how the green line within the exhibition space shaped his perception and promptly drew a parallel to his own project.¹⁸ The 'evocative' consisted of comments expressing the impact of the collages and the space on the participants, as well as the personal relationships they established with them. Many participants interpreted the collages through the lens of their own experiences, while

*18 - From my exhibition diary, 09 May
2022.*

The tape immediately captured his attention upon entering the room. "Tapes are shaping the room," he remarked. He then proceeded to discuss his personal scrapbooking endeavour and how he had incorporated his collaged book into a previous project. As the conversation continued, he expressed a desire to keep a memento from the exhibition by requesting permission to tear off a piece of the green tape and take it with him.

19 - From my exhibition diary, 10 May 2022.

He actively interacted with the fragments, particularly those about the military and demolished constructions, and inquired about Nicosia and its division. The discussion naturally transitioned to contested spaces, eventually focusing on Sarajevo. During our conversation, he began softly humming a song that initially eluded my understanding. Finally, he revealed that it was an Arabic song composed for Sarajevo, explaining that its lyrics pose the poignant question, "What is happening to you, Sarajevo?" He further revealed his role as a music researcher...

20 - From my exhibition diary, 16 May 2022. -

Upon engaging in conversation, she promptly initiated a discussion about Northern Ireland, leading me to assume that she hails from that region. Interestingly, she swiftly transitioned to the topic of finding a resolution for the island of Cyprus. Intrigued, I posed the question, "Is it possible to find a solution for Cyprus?" or "Is it necessary?" Our ensuing conversation revealed a consensus among us that there appeared to be no pressing or life-threatening issues for the people of Cyprus that demanded an immediate solution. As I remarked, "It is all politics", she readily agreed, affirming that this is often the case.

21 - From my exhibition diary, 09 May 2022.

During our conversation with one of the participants, which initially revolved around collage-making and the amalgamation of various elements in the exhibition space, the focus eventually shifted towards the island itself. To my surprise, he admitted that despite having visited Cyprus previously, he was unaware of its divided nature and had never actually witnessed the border. And he said there are lots of details I realised during his exhibition experience.

others focused primarily on their emotional responses. For example, during a conversation with a participant, the dialogue shifted from Nicosia to Sarajevo and centred around a song composed in Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, creating a connection between these two geographically distinct contexts.¹⁹ Another interaction with an audience member revolved around comparing and contrasting Northern Ireland with Nicosia.²⁰ Lastly, the third group, 'instructive' interpretations, encompasses the participants' associations, relating to what they have learned and how it contributes to their contextual understanding of the research through the collages and the exhibition space. Within this group, the participants can be further divided into two main subcategories. One subset of participants questioned the context-independent research methodology employed in collage-making, seeking clarification on the rationale and methodology behind its application. On the other hand, another subset of participants focused on the wealth of information about Nicosia and the extensive research undertaken in relation to the city, finding each fragment within the collages to be a source of knowledge.²¹

The categorisation, however, does not imply that the participants themselves were categorised. Rather, it refers to my own classification of the interpretations provided. It is important to note that the participants' comments were diverse and could be organised according to multiple categories, suggesting that the interpretations of the participants were not strictly confined to a single category. For example, one participant perceived the space as a collage and even included me as part of that collage. He conveyed his interpretation to me through a photograph, which featured me as a fragment within the collaged space. On the other hand, another participant, who is a political caricaturist, saw parallels between the fragments of Nicosia and her own political work. Furthermore, she also shared what she had learned about Nicosia in the space through her interpretation. Therefore, what makes this research intriguing is not only the reactional, evocative, and instructive nature of these interpretations but also the underlying collage effect that triggers and elicits these diverse interpretations. The analysis thus also delved into the mechanisms through which fragment or collage influences and prompts these varied interpretations.

Dialogues guided by the fragments²²

In the context of the exhibition, I discovered that the dialogues were sparked by fragments within the collaged compositions. These fragments possessed the capacity to arouse curiosity, evoke emotions, and provoke thoughts, thereby instigating dialogue among participants inherently. However, this initiating power varied among individuals; while certain fragments sparked dialogue for some, others found resonance with different fragments. Through my analysis, I observed that participants engaged in dialogue by associating their own interests and reflections with various fragments of the collages, such as colours, textures, traces, and images.

Given the diverse range of materials employed in the collages and the absence of any prescribed rules or restrictions on technique, it is challenging to pinpoint the exact fragments responsible for initiating dialogue for each participant. Moreover, attributing the dialogical potential solely to a single fragment within the collaged composition might not be completely appropriate, given the agency of the fragments. As introduced Part I, fragments are inherently interrelated and influenced by each other. However, upon reviewing the dialogues documented in my diary, it became apparent that any fragment within the collage composition holds the potential to spark conversation. Furthermore, it was noted that participants often identified commonalities among these fragmented elements, relating them to their personal experiences, lives, or perspectives, thereby naturally transitioning into dialogue. This chapter thus aims to explore how collage fosters a dialogic environment through its fragments and to illuminate the variations inherent within these fragments within the context of this exhibition.

When participants use their professional expertise or background knowledge to interpret textures, colours, images, or materials that are familiar or interesting to them, it can significantly influence their understanding of the collaged composition, leading to the generation of new meanings and fostering further conversation. The dialogues showed that every fragment of the collaged compositions, whether small or large, overt, or subtly hidden, has the potential to shape participants' perceptions. An architectural researcher, for instance, expressed his surprise at the multitude of fragments in the exhibition space. Despite the abundance, he focused on a particular fragment, a small image of the flag of the United Kingdom within the historical collage composition, and remarked, "*There are many details that try to convey something about the city, but I can specifically feel the influence of British power on the island*".²³ Another participant, whom I later discovered was a lecturer in landscape architecture, remarked on the density of the exhibition space

²² To read the exhibition diary see the appendix IV.

²³ From my research-exhibition diary on 9 May 2022.

and the myriad of details scattered throughout. While observing the green fragments transitioning from the ceiling to the wall, he asked about their meaning. Upon learning that they represented the border in Nicosia, he remarked:

*The border is quite interesting, seems like a river. I am wondering who draw the border. It is like Pakistan... The story of the green line like a collage. Somebody came and drew a line on the map. And in this case, you are the collagist, you are the power.*²⁴

Reflecting on participants' engagement with fragments during and after the collage-making process, I have gained a deeper understanding of the unpredictable and organic nature of collage. Initially, I viewed individual fragments as necessary components, but I underestimated the participants' inclination to delve into them, often beyond what I had anticipated. However, through our dialogues, I have realised the profound significance of even the smallest or seemingly inconspicuous fragments in catalysing meaningful discussions. As evidenced by the dialogue mentioned above, a small flag fragment ignited a discussion about the colonial period of the United Kingdom in Cyprus, prompting inquiries into its relationship with Nicosia. This illustrated that every fragment, regardless of size or visibility, possesses the power to prompt exploration of complex topics. Additionally, the next dialogue mentioned above, a more prominent fragment was interpreted in a vastly different manner by the participant, emphasising the diverse perspectives fragments can elicit and their ability to prompt varied interpretations within the collaged environment. This dialogue prompted an exploration of power dynamics and prompted me to reassess the implications of my role as the creator of the exhibition and the collage. Despite my intention for the green line fragments to symbolise Nicosia's division, this conversation shed light on the potential risks inherent in collage-making, sparking discussions about the inadvertent reinforcement of Nicosia's boundaries through creative decisions. Thus, within the context of this exhibition, it can be said that every fragment has the potential to initiate dialogue in a questioning, thought-provoking, evocative, or instructive manner.

As dialogues with the participants unfolded during the exhibition, it became evident that each individual discerned unique personal connotations within the fragments, consequently influencing the course of our conversations in unexpected ways. For instance, in a conversation with a researcher in architecture, the fragments prompted a discussion about the geography and culture of his upbringing. Initially hesitant, this conversation evolved into a deep and comprehensive discourse when he recognized the fragment with word 'freedom.' Despite expressing limited knowledge of Nicosia and

²⁴ From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

Cyprus initially, he found resonance between the context of the research and the political constraints in China. Reflecting on his personal experiences, he remarked, *“We seldom discuss politics or the government in China; it’s an unwritten law”*.²⁵ However, as he engaged with the fragments, he pointed to one containing the word ‘freedom’ and expressed his aspirations for Nicosia’s future, stating *“Maybe one day, the island would eventually be reunified again”*.²⁶

A similar dialogue ensued with another participant, a researcher and director in the planning department of Architecture School. She initially asked, *“Can I pass the border?”*²⁷ pointing the stand constructed with fragments to represent the border, and then shared her memories during the conflict in Northern Ireland. Later, she transitioned to questioning the solution for the Cyprus border, asking *“What is the solution for border in Cyprus?”*²⁸ Delving deeper, our dialogue shifted to whether it was possible or necessary to remove the border. This prompted reflection on broader geopolitical issues, such as the situation in Ukraine, which was prominent in the news during the exhibition period. The fragment representing the border thus catalysed a discourse spanning from the contested history of Northern Ireland to the complexities of the Cyprus conflict and eventually to the ongoing debates surrounding Ukraine.

In these dialogues, I became acutely aware of the profound impact fragments had in eliciting meaningful discussions and reflections. Witnessing how everyone found personal resonance in particular pieces within the collages illuminated the depth of interpretation possible within collage. These dialogues not only touched upon topics related to Nicosia but also illuminated Nicosia through the lens of participants’ diverse experiences. This experience challenged my initial assumptions about the exhibition, emphasising the importance of embracing the unexpected and creating space for a multitude of interpretations to emerge. Moreover, the deep engagement with cross-cultural exchanges and geopolitical issues underscored the collage’s role in promoting empathy and understanding across borders. Unexpected connections, such as linking the contested politics to discussions about China, or finding a relation between Northern Ireland, Nicosia, and Ukraine, further emphasised the richness of the dialogical process. As a collagist-researcher, these dialogues in exhibition have been both an exploration and a learning experience. It has enriched the possibilities of collaged spaces that can invite reflection and engagement, where fragments, personal narratives, and wider socio-political contexts converge to shape participants’ experiences.

25 From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

26 From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

27 From my research-exhibition diary on 16 May 2022.

28 From my research-exhibition diary on 16 May 2022.

The dialogues facilitated by the fragments not only unveiled participants' personal connections but also sparked discussions about their respective practices and areas of expertise. For instance, in a conversation with an archaeologist-researcher, attention was drawn to collages illustrating attempts to revive abandoned sites along the Nicosia border. After studying these collages, the researcher shared concerns about preserving such sites and deliberated over whether the traces of recent conflicts should be retained, given their perceived intensity compared to earlier periods. As an archaeologist working in the field, he expressed discomfort with encountering war remains in settlements daily, citing their potential impact on residents' desire to inhabit such areas. Despite this, he acknowledged the archaeological value of these remains, contrasting contemporary conflicts with those of ancient civilizations, recognizing their significance in shaping Nicosia's history. He noted:

*While remnants of war could be monumentalised in historical structures, such monumentalising might not be possible for in residential areas, On the other hand, archaeological work is informed by such remnants. War remains unearthed from ancient civilizations serve as valuable sources for research, unlike those from modern conflicts. But again, these traces form part of Nicosia's history now. Working with war remnants is complicated.*²⁹

Similarly, in another dialogue, a musician and researcher connected the same fragments to memories of Sarajevo, sharing a song associated with the Bosnia and Herzegovina war. He recalled:

*I remember the song about Sarajevo...I remember when I was a child and there was a song in Bahrain during the Bosnia and Herzegovina war...It's in Arabic, but it's about Sarajevo, and it asks, "what is happening to you, Sarajevo?"*³⁰

And then the conversation transitioned the conversation from interpreting traces of wars and conflicts in the city to exploring how various disciplines interpret them. Another participant, a political cartoonist, pointed to the same fragments and reflected on the power of the traces left by conflicts, stating that she could spend hours deciphering their meaning. She remarked:

*Working with paper is poetic. It takes time. It pushes you to focus on the details. Look at your videos, look at the process. They are something, something about time and space.*³¹ She added, *Politics give a strong language for criticism. But working with paper brings depth to it. Paper makes it real, powerful. During the*

29 From my research-exhibition diary on 12 May 2022.

30 From my research-exhibition diary on 10 May 2022.

31 From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

*process of working with paper, cutting them, drawing them, - you have moments.*³²

These dialogues exemplify how fragments not only generate ideas about Nicosia but also stimulate interdisciplinary discussions and enrich personal experiences. Through interactions with participants from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, I realised the capacity of fragments to evoke memories, spark conversations, and provoke reflection. It was unexpected for me to witness how the same fragments could elicit vastly different interpretations and associations, ranging from historical contexts to personal memories. These conversations highlighted the dynamic nature of collage, highlighting its ability to transcend disciplinary boundaries and foster multifaceted dialogues. As the creator of the exhibition and the collages, these interactions deepened my appreciation for the subtle ways in which fragments contribute to the richness and versatility of collage interpretation. They reinforced my understanding of collage not only as a creative practice but also as a platform for meaningful exchange and exploration, where fragments serve as the foundation for deeper insights and connections.

The fragments also facilitated an environment of mutual learning and discussion for both me and the participants, regardless of their knowledge about Nicosia. Participants engaged in conversations prompted by specific fragments, leading to inquiries and reflections on their own experiences about the city. For instance, during the conversation with a geography student, examining a collage depicting the border area behind the exhibition space sparked a dialogue about personal encounters with the border. The student, engaged in a project on Nicosia, remarked on the tangible reality of the border upon seeing it firsthand, stating:

*Yes, there was a border but until I see it, I realise that it is real. On the other hand, crossing the border was so easy. Every night, we crossed the border and hang out in the northern part. Cheap food and friendly people!*³³

This prompted a reciprocal exchange of experiences, during which I shared my challenges in visiting the border due to political unrest, while he recounted their seamless interactions with both sides of the divide. Similarly, a PhD researcher in architecture, upon observing the fragments in the border zone of exhibition, questioned the regulations of division and border, revealing gaps in their prior knowledge despite previous visits to Cyprus, stating:

I only knew about the conflict on the island between Turkish and Greek societies. It was a sun-sea holiday, so I hadn't seen the

32 From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

33 From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

*border. But how? Can I cross the border? Do I need to provide anything?*³⁴

Our ensuing dialogue highlighted the divergent experiences and perspectives shaped by individual encounters with the city and its contested history.

In another dialogue, a participant with an experience of living in Cyprus expressed surprise at the exhibition's portrayal of conflict through fragments. She stated:

*I lived in Cyprus for a couple of years, but I remember little about the conflict. However, after seeing these fragments, I started to feel like there is an active conflict on the island.*³⁵

And cautioned that the exhibition seemed manipulative. This observation sparked a conversation about differing perceptions of the city, raising awareness of the exhibition's potential impact on viewer interpretations. Furthermore, a brief interaction with a participant from South Cyprus, marked by a shared understanding of political conflict, quickly transitioned to a discussion about controversial historical figures and the complexities of crossing borders. She pointed to the fragment with the image of Grivas and said, "*Grivas was the biggest mistake*".³⁶ These encounters exemplify how the fragments not only prompt introspection but also foster dialogue on contentious political issues, showcasing the power of visual stimuli to evoke emotional responses and stimulate critical reflection.

Engaging in these dialogues underscored the profound influence of collage fragments in fostering mutual learning and exchange. Interacting with participants from diverse backgrounds offered me invaluable insights into the intricate history and division of Nicosia. While some participants were already familiar with Cyprus, many discovered the conflict and division through the exhibition's fragments, sparking their curiosity and prompting insightful questions. Their perspectives, especially those with experience in Southern Cyprus, provided unique insights that expanded my own understanding. These exchanges revealed that each participant's interpretation was shaped by their distinct encounters and backgrounds. Nevertheless, the shared ground offered by the collage fragments facilitated the exchange of diverse perspectives, fostering a dynamic environment for mutual learning and understanding.

Colours, on the other hand, can be stated as one of the primary attention-grabbing elements initiating dialogue within the context of exhibition. Many participants perceive colours as the driving force shaping their understanding

34 From my research-exhibition diary on 11 May 2022.

35 From my research-exhibition diary on 12 May 2022.

36 From my research-exhibition diary on 19 May 2022.

of the collage composition. For instance, during the dialogue with a participant who later introduced herself as a medical student, the colour red became the main subject of the conversation. She paused in the section where the historical background of Nicosia was presented and initiated a dialogue, remarking “*The blood is so powerful*”.³⁷ As our dialogue progressed, she confessed her unfamiliarity with Nicosia but directly interpreted the red colour as indicative of bloodshed, asserting, “*I can say that something tragic occurred in Nicosia*”.³⁸ Similarly, another participant, a German researcher in architecture, made a similar observation for the same collage composition. Despite having limited knowledge about Nicosia and never having visited, she noted:

*Fragments speak volumes; the striking red, reminiscent of war or something bloody, suggests to me that conflict once ravaged the island.*³⁹

Further supporting the impact of coloured fragments in collage, a conversation with a landscape architect sheds light on the influence of personal expertise in interpretation. Her attention to the green and blue colours within the composition unveiled new meanings in the context of Nicosia that I had not thought of before. Throughout our conversation, she emphasised the interestingness of the green line representing the Border Zone of Nicosia, remarking:

*Green and Blue are remarkably intense. In our work with landscapes, we frequently encounter these colours as trees and water, but in Nicosia, they present something different. Green symbolises the border and boundaries, while blue evokes a sense of protection. The line depicted here transcends its conventional interpretation and encompasses an entire zone.*⁴⁰

As I indicated in Chapter 3, I briefly mentioned about my experiences with colours and recounted my personal exploration of the significance of colour in collage, exemplified through the creation of ‘Bloody Christmas.’ Despite initially using red to cover the silhouette of death people within the fragments, as detailed in my diary:

*I moved away from my identity as a collagist -researcher and focused solely on my emotions, reflection of my feelings of anger and sadness...transforming the fragment into more of an activist poster than a historical research collage.*⁴¹

37 From my research-exhibition diary on 9 May 2022.

38 From my research-exhibition diary on 9 May 2022.

39 From my research-exhibition diary on 13 May 2022.

40 From my research-exhibition diary on 10 May 2022.

41 From my research-exhibition diary on 7 May 2021.

This personal reflection also emphasises the emotive power of colour, reinforcing my expectation of the vividness of red within collages addressing contested themes. However, the dialogues sparked by the exhibition indicates that individuals' relationships with colours can also be shaped by their respective disciplines and backgrounds. Participants engaged directly with colours, drawing on their professional expertise to initiate dialogue. While I initially considered this phenomenon mainly in relation to red, insights from a landscape architect regarding the interpretation of green and blue colours broadened my perspective. This realisation prompted me to reassess the significance of coloured fragments within the context of Nicosia, leading to new inquiries about the potential use of colours in collages. I recognised how colours can serve as direct conduits for personal connection and expression, fostering diverse readings and perspectives. Moreover, within the realm of collage, I experienced firsthand how even a single colour can enhance one's capacity for thought and understanding through interdisciplinary dialogue.

These dialogues underscored how collage serves as a versatile medium, offering individuals a platform for self-expression irrespective of age, background, nationality, beliefs, or gender. Many of the dialogues cited above support this notion. However, a dialogue with a five-year-old participant, accompanied by their mother, further emphasised this idea. While conversing with his mother, he began making his own collage using fragments available on the table, most centred around Nicosia. Starting with an image from the border, he added many colours and drawings. Later, he explained that the colours concealed all the barrels, symbolising a river in his collage, with blue representing water and red dots depicting fish. In his imaginative world, Nicosia transformed into a scene detached from its original context of conflict or division. Nevertheless, fragments of Nicosia lingered in the background. This experience led me to reflect on the concept of borders, as the border in his collage metamorphosed into a river, symbolising both departure from and connection to its original context. This transformation evoked the memory of the river that once divided the city before it became a border and later a road. It served as a poignant reminder that despite the child's unplanned visit to the exhibition, he managed to find inspiration and create something meaningful through the collage's fragments, illustrating the universal appeal of collage as a medium for self-expression and storytelling.

All the dialogues about the fragments in the collaged space showed various ways of thinking and interpreting collage. In the case of this exhibition space, it is important to note that the participants did not possess any prior understanding of the research context or practice that served as the basis for their interpretations. However, this absence of pre-existing knowledge did not hinder their ability to develop an understanding. On the contrary, they associated the exhibition with something they already possessed, becoming

a fragment of the exhibition at that particular moment and location. Within this context, two key factors can be identified as influencing the participants' comprehension: the fragments of collaged space and the practice of collage itself. Regarding the first factor, the fragments played a significant role in dialogue; they formed a cohesive composition, representing an inquiry. In terms of this collaged exhibition, while a specific fragment may have sparked the initial conversations, it should be understood that this fragment is an integral element within the exhibition space. As participants navigated the space, they actively contributed to the ongoing dialogue by forming connections with the fragments. This interactive process transformed the exhibition space into a dynamic collage, with participants embedding themselves as integral fragments within it. The second factor pertains to collage practice, which is characterised by its flexible and openness nature. It empowered participants to interpret the images from their own unique perspectives, free from rigid constraints or predetermined meanings. This liberated approach facilitated diverse interpretations and subjective experiences, enriching the dialogue and fostering mutual understanding.

The dialogues sparked by the collaged fragments transcended boundaries of knowledge and experience, serving as conduits for meaningful engagement and shared exploration. Despite participants' varying backgrounds and familiarity with the research context, the fragments inspired diverse perspectives and interpretations, prompting unexpected dialogues and reflections. This emphasised the transformative potential of collage, providing a space for individuals to engage freely and meaningfully with visual stimuli. Moreover, the participatory nature of collage practice allowed participants to position themselves as active agents within the collaged space, forming personal connections with the research context and enriching the dialogue. As a result, the exhibition space emerged as a dynamic platform for learning, questioning, and shared experiences, underscoring the profound impact of visual mediums in facilitating meaningful engagement and dialogue.

Transforming alternative space of collage to the room for dialogue

The objective of this exhibition space was to explore the dialogical potential of collage and its importance in contested areas. In line with this aim, the space was planned, and a contextual framework was defined. However, during the installation phase, the preparatory process evolved, transforming into an experiential collage-making in space. In other words, the preparatory phase turned into an act of creating a collage space, and the space became not only a platform where the dialogical potentials of previously made collages were tested but also an experience of collaging the space with fragments of Nicosia. Therefore, the testing space not only served as a test but also embodied the experiential nature of this practice-based research - the act of collaging space.

In examining the dialogical potential of collage, it became evident that collage serves as a medium that establishes direct and personal communication with its viewers, fundamentally shaping their perceptions and interpretations through the fragments within collaged compositions. As evident from various conversations held during the space, individuals engaged with the fragments based on their own cognitive processes, resulting in interpretations that intertwined with the subject matter of my research. This observation suggests that collage possesses expressive and dialogical potential, facilitating conversations and the generation of new meanings from seemingly ordinary fragments. Through their engagement with the collages, viewers were able to bring their unique perspectives and experiences into the dialogue, thereby enhancing the transformative nature of the exhibition.

By re-contextualising the fragments through the act of collage-making, viewers were encouraged to establish connections between the collages and their personal frames of reference. This dynamic interaction sparked conversations and fostered reinterpretations of the collages, surpassing their original form, and imbuing them with new significance. The expressive nature of collage enabled viewers to communicate their thoughts, emotions, and ideas through fragmented imagery. The juxtaposition and combination of disparate elements within the collages provided a rich visual vocabulary for viewers to engage with, enabling them to articulate their own narratives and interpretations. This process of active engagement and interpretation not only revitalised the collages but also invited viewers to contribute their unique perspectives to the overall discourse. Furthermore, the dialogical potential of collage became evident as viewers engaged in conversations with me. The collages served as catalysts for meaningful discussions, prompting viewers to share their thoughts, insights, and personal connections. Through this dialogical exchange, the fragments transcended their role as static pieces of collage and became dynamic vehicles for communication, inviting diverse

interpretations and fostering a sense of collective exploration. By allowing individuals to bring their own perspectives and experiences to the collages, collage-making facilitated the creation of conversations and the emergence of fresh meanings from ordinary fragments. Its expressive and dialogical potential breathed new life into the practice, transforming it into a catalyst for personal engagement, interpretation, and collective exploration.

On the other hand, the relationship between this experiential process and the contested space of Nicosia raises some inquiries regarding the aim of this research. Unlike the individual collage-making processes experienced in previous chapters, this experimental exhibition provided insights not only into what I learned about Nicosia but also into what others can learn and how they can interpret the collages. One conclusion that can be drawn from this is that it is possible to convey stories about the city through collages created using fragments from contentious areas. Fragments, which may be considered sensitive in the context of these areas, have the ability to directly resonate with individuals' emotions and thoughts, bridging the gap between what they wish to communicate about the city and the viewers. In other words, such work offers a visual language to the viewers. When evaluated within the context of this research, this result demonstrates the potential to create a collaged language about the city in addition to the learning and discussion of the city through the technique of collage-making in the subsequent stages of the research. Another conclusion is that the potential for discussions about the city will increase within this environment. Collage has gaps in and between fragments, and each viewer interprets the fragments and the gaps between them in their own unique way. Thus, while collage supports the multiplicity of the unknown, it also underscores the potential contained within this realm while asking what is next/more.

In extending the exploration of collage's potential within the contested space of Nicosia, this research delved into a deeper understanding of collage as a dynamic medium for storytelling and dialogue. The experimental exhibition, diverging from the individual collage-making processes discussed in previous chapters, offered profound insights into the interpretative possibilities of collages. This signifies the ability of collage to narrate urban narratives using fragments from contested sites, particularly in how these fragments resonate emotionally and intellectually with participants, thus bridging their communicative intentions about the city.

The exhibition highlighted collage's inherent dialogical nature. This medium, with its composite of fragments, acts as a mediator, fostering multifaceted dialogues among participants. The collage space, free from preconditions and constraints, transformed into a dialogic arena where diverse perspectives about Nicosia were shared and contested. Here, the significance lies not in

the agreement or discord of ideas but in the cultivation of a dialogue-rich atmosphere. Collage, thus, emerges as a common language, transcending barriers of language, culture, and identity, and uniting diverse voices around a common platform. This underscores its potential as an inclusive tool for engagement in multicultural and historically complex settings like Nicosia. While the current research did not implement practical collage workshops in these contested areas, the exhibition's success in facilitating dialogue suggests a promising avenue for future research.

Furthermore, the concept of collage as a transformative and perpetually evolving medium was vividly demonstrated within the exhibition space. Whether through finished collages, suspended fragments, or shifting images, the exhibition embodied the notion of collage – a state of constant flux and becoming. This dynamic nature, intrinsic to collage whether on paper or in a spatial context, was evident as each piece evolved into a shared dialogue. As participants navigated this space, their perceptions and interpretations were in continuous motion, with the collage fragments serving as catalysts for an ever-evolving dialogue.

This exhibition marks a significant transition from the alternative space of collage on paper, as discussed in previous chapters, to a tangible, shared collage space. The same principles of spontaneity, freedom, and creativity that defined the alternative paper collage space were mirrored in the exhibition environment. Participants' reactions and interpretations confirmed the organic, unrestricted nature of the collage space. In this sense, the exhibition not only transformed the physical space into a collage but also redefined it as a space for a dialogical room, where each participant's unique perspective contributed to the collective understanding of Nicosia. The exhibition thus showed that collage has the potential to be a tool for creating alternative, dialogical spaces that are continually in the process of becoming in contested spaces.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

The potentials of collage in contested spaces

This creative practice research investigated the potential of employing collage to engage with contested spaces, organised in two parts.

Part I developed a theoretical framework for examining creative practice in contested spaces. It was divided into two chapters. The first delved into the analysis of collage, contested spaces, and agency. The second section examined the siege of Sarajevo and artistic practices produced during the Bosnia and Herzegovina War between 1992 and 1995. It then focused on Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project, serving as a case study that navigates these concepts. Part I set the stage for exploring my own creative practice within such environments without delving into personal experiences but providing a theoretical background for my own creative practice, that was then explored in Part II.

Part II of this thesis, encompassing Chapters 3-7, focused on the practical exploration of collage in Nicosia, the divided capital of Cyprus. This part employed my own collage-making process to investigate the potential of collage within contested spaces. Each experiment informed the next one, fostering progressive inquiries into the interaction between collage and contested spaces. Through this evolving process, deeper insights were gained into both the medium of collage and the intricate dynamics of Nicosia, integrating this knowledge into the broader research context.

Chapter 1 focused on defining and exploring key concepts: collage, contested spaces, and agency. The historical evolution of collage in architecture and art was traced, emphasising its multifaceted roles in communication, design, critical thinking, and interpretation. Collage was characterised as a versatile medium by its lack of specific rules and interdisciplinary nature, transcending traditional boundaries to foster multi-directional communication and allow diverse perspectives to coexist and interact.

Contested spaces were defined as complex areas marked by cultural and power dynamics, often manifesting as urban zones where different cultural, religious, and ethnic identities intersect, leading to increased tensions and hostilities. It was indicated that these spaces challenge urban planning as they often represent deeper division within cities, creating physical and social barriers that hinder harmonious urban living and ignoring the realities of contested spaces. Despite numerous policy initiatives, ignoring the realities of these spaces has frequently rendered such efforts theoretical rather than practical, failing to achieve the desired peace outcomes. As a result, this research suggested that collage, with its rule-free, open, heterogeneous, and fragmented nature, can be an alternative approach to working in contested spaces where boundaries, conflicts, and differences are challenging.

It introduced the concept of agency to understand how collage can transform perceptions in these contested spaces. Agency in collage was discussed in terms of the relationships between fragments, the creator, and the viewer. This approach emphasised that collage, as an inherently fragmented medium, allows each fragment to retain its meaning while offering new interpretations in a composition. It was also highlighted that the interpretation of a collage can vary, influenced by the individual's way of thinking. Therefore, in the

context of this thesis, the understanding of collages made in contested spaces was explained as the agency of collage, based on the relationships of fragments with each other and with individuals.

Chapter 2 built upon this framework, analysing the response of artists and architects during the siege of Sarajevo in the Bosnia and Herzegovina War. A key focus was Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project, highlighting its innovative use of architectural techniques such as montage, collage, and assemblage in reconstructing war-damaged cities. The study revealed how architects and artists adapt their expertise under war conditions, challenging constraints and using their creative resistance against violence. Such practices emerged as alternative methods to document and denounce the conflict, communicating these provocations to the wider world.

Lebbeus Woods' concepts in the Sarajevo Project illuminated an alternative approach to understanding and reshaping war-damaged environments from an architectural perspective. His architectural methodology underscored the transformative potential of such environments, advocating for 'freespaces' and 'heterarchy' to foster societal healing. This project transcended the conventional practices of architecture, offering an alternative method and illustrating architecture's potential to enable people to envision new ways of living using architecture as a medium. Moreover, Woods' representational techniques exemplified the intersection of art, architecture, and critique. Through paper, imagery, and narrative sequencing, his work went beyond traditional architectural representation, creating an alternate world that connected the imaginary with the reality of conflict. His drawings, collages, and arrangements transformed into immersive mediums, communicating complex ideas and emotions. Woods highlighted the potential of collage in conveying the dualities of conflict and transformation through his work in contested spaces.

In Part II, my creative practice research traced the transformation of Nicosia during conflict and post-conflict periods through my own collage-making. By assembling fragments of the city's contested nature, the research introduced layers of history and texture, offering new perspectives on the space and the knowledge it embodies. This approach produced descriptive, imaginative, interpretive, spatial and dialogical narratives of Nicosia's contested nature, and also demonstrated the potential of collage as a medium for historians, urbanists, designers, and enablers to understand and engage with such spaces. Part II proposed an alternative framework for working within contested spaces through creative practice. This framework critically explored power dynamics, engaged with the epistemology of space, and introduced alternative approaches for learning, understanding, analysing, and studying these complex environments. Below, I offer an overview of this process.

Chapter 3 of this thesis scrutinised Cyprus's contested past. It addressed the first research question:

How can collage serve as a means to engage with the intricate history of a contested past?

This chapter provided a chronological overview of Cyprus' multifaceted history. It addressed the complex dynamics of ethnic and cultural interactions within the island, shaped by a history of Ottomans and British rule, and the subsequent division between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. Alongside the historical research, this chapter explored key historical moments through the collage-making, including the period of unrest post-1960 independence, the 1974 official division, and ongoing negotiations between the two communities. Additionally, it discussed the significant impact of Southern Cyprus's accession to the European Union in 2004, which facilitated movements like the opening of border crossings and had considerable effects on the island's development.

Building upon this historical overview, the collage experiments illuminated the descriptive and multifaceted potential of collage as a research methodology in spaces marked by contested and multivocal histories. By integrating diverse perspectives, it attempted to offer an unbiased interpretation of Cyprus' history, encompassing narratives from Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, Greek, Turkish, and British colonial viewpoints. Each collage encapsulated critical junctures in Cyprus' history, representing these moments through fragments and opening diverse narratives. These collages went beyond mere representation of the moment. Instead, they emphasised the complexity and the layered inquiries of the island's history, including its traumatic experiences.

By juxtaposing historically-interpreted narratives from varied sources, the collages served as visual representations that not only depicted specific concepts but also acted as catalysts, presenting diverse and often contentious interpretations of issues in contested spaces. The process uncovered detailed aspects of historical moments, highlighting key figures, places, and symbols, fostering an active learning process by prompting questioning, reflection, and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The analysis of the collage-making process, supported by a recorded diary, demonstrated collage's potential in contested spaces, embodying emotive and provocative elements such as irony, evocation, critique, and revelation.

In tracing Cyprus's complex past through collage-making, this chapter scrutinised the multiple histories of Cyprus hands-on and questioned the potency of fragments in these contested spaces. Centred on this contested history, it enabled the production of images that are indirect, evocative, and provocative. It underscored collage's capacity to elicit complex narrative and cognitive responses, especially in dealing with fragments from disputed territories like Cyprus. This exploration not only showcased the descriptive potential of collage but also highlighted its role in generating deeper inquiries in historical research.

Moreover, the exploration indicated not only the descriptive potential of collage as a medium but also underscored its capacity to generate deeper inquiries in historical research. Engaging in the collage-making process has opened avenues for future research, suggesting collage as an innovative approach in historical studies, particularly in settings characterised by diverse narratives and cultural intersections. This chapter, therefore, contributed not only to understanding of contested historical narratives but also

illustrated the transformative potential of creative methodologies in exploring complex and multi-layered histories, aligning with the broader objectives of the thesis.

Chapter 4 responded to the second research question:

How can experimental collage-making be used to understand the divided city of Nicosia?

Diverging from traditional historical analysis, this chapter embraced an experimental approach, using collage to interpret and imagine the city's contested nature. The collages were initiated by fragments of the city, generating narratives without preliminary research. Throughout this process, five distinct processes were followed: Nicosia's ascension to capital city status, its tangible and intangible boundaries, the genesis and significance of these divisions, and reflections on the city's potential and future trajectory.

In this chapter, diverse scales and techniques were employed in creating the collages, offering varied narratives of the city. The initial focus was on maps, examining Nicosia's evolution into a capital, highlighting the socio-political influences on the city's division. The second collage examined the city's visible and hidden boundaries, revealing the tragedies of Nicosia's division in terms of migration, economy, politics, and social struggles. The third collage narrative focused on the tangible border within Nicosia. The fourth collage explored the border's no-man's zone, indicating division but also the potential for reconciliation. The final collage shifted attention to the opposite side of the border, showcasing collage-making's role in offering alternative city perspectives.

This experimental process acknowledged that multiple interpretations could be drawn from each fragment. However, it also emphasised that collage lacks predetermined rules or a set methodology for storytelling. Within this chapter, collage emerged as an interpretative and imaginative tool, allowing for an understanding of Nicosia's perception without the researcher's physical presence in the city. The fragments of the city provided a framework for constructing narratives and comprehending the city's complexities. While the collages did not present a singular narrative or collective voice, their significance lay in evoking curiosity and posing questions for further inquiry. Thus, by embracing the methodology of collage-making presented in this chapter, it introduces collage as a productive method for urban research, particularly in its capacity to imagine and interpret a city as intricate and layered as Nicosia.

Chapter 5 responded to the third research question:

How can collage be employed to understand what has been happening in the peace-making process and foster new interpretations of the transformed post-conflict texture of Nicosia?

This chapter employed collage to understand the planned future of Nicosia, particularly in the context of ongoing peace-making operations. It analysed the projects that have influenced the peace-building process, promoting cooperation and reconciliation between the divided Cypriot communities. It critically examined projects, including the sewerage project that necessarily required two communities to work together, the Nicosia Master Plan that aimed at facilitating unification through urban planning, and the New Vision,

which offered a new approach to the city by recognising the deficiencies in the NMP.

During the examination of peace-making projects, it was acknowledged that the desired future for Nicosia is one of unity. However, practical implementation often fell short due to limitations imposed by the city's conflict and division, as observed through the collages. The Buffer Zone emerged as a prominent obstacle hindering project success. Despite the contested city's limitations, the collage-making process demonstrated the capacity to work beyond borders and constraints, offering a free working environment acknowledging realities but not constrained by limitations.

The creation of collages not only spurred deeper personal inquiry but also enabled critical reflections on urban fragmentation and the reimagining of urban spaces, laying the groundwork for Chapter 6, where further imaginings of the city are explored. Through investigating projects through collage-making, insights into the interaction between urban planning and symbolic representations of peace-making in contested spaces were gained. Collages served as representations of these projects, revealing underlying tensions and complexities, and highlighting the analytical and transformative potential of collage in interrogating and re-evaluating urban interventions. This chapter emphasised the significant role of creative methodologies like collage in unravelling and reinterpreting intricate urban narratives, underlining how collage can enrich understanding for urban observers and researchers in contested studies by encouraging critical engagement with project motivations and outcomes.

Chapter 6 responded to the fourth research question:

How can collage provide an alternative approach to working with contested spaces?

In this chapter, the transformative potential of collage was emphasised, particularly in its application to understanding and reimagining Nicosia's Buffer Zone. This method demonstrated its efficacy in spatial thinking in contested spaces. The chapter conceptualised an 'alternative space' within the collage, reflecting on the potential for such spaces within the Buffer Zone. This approach allowed the collage into a narrative tool, offering new insights into Nicosia's future while illustrating its capacity to facilitate diverse social interactions and spatial dimensions.

The Buffer Zone was reconceptualised as an alternative space conducive to peace initiatives and dialogues, symbolising both activism and the possibility of reconciliation. This chapter synthesised the knowledge gained from Nicosia and the collage series, resulting in a deepened understanding of the Buffer Zone. A personal interpretation within the collage context, represented by the metaphor of a furniture store in the Buffer Zone, served as a reflection on thought, memory, and a way of living. This highlighted the collage's dual role as both an artistic medium and a metaphorical tool for exploring space, encouraging a departure from conventional thinking and inviting exploration of the interplay between reality and imagination.

The collage-making experiment in this chapter presented collage as a dynamic medium

that fosters an environment of interaction and continuous evolution of meaning, disrupting linear and hierarchical thought structures. It emphasised collage as a platform for engaging with challenging spaces, offering an opportunity to articulate speculative ideas about the city. The insights contributed not only to a deeper understanding of contested urban spaces but also to further exploration in urban design, emphasising the collage's designerly role as a catalyst for innovative thinking in a constantly evolving world. Therefore, the research also suggested that collage could serve as a valuable tool for designers focusing on contested spaces, offering multifaceted perspectives and fostering innovative thinking.

Chapter 7 responded to the final research question:

When viewers encounter collages created from fragments of contested spaces, how do these fragments influence their interpretations and thoughts?

Chapter 7 attempted an exploration of the dialogical potential of collage in contested spaces. Initially conceived as an exhibition space to assess the dialogical capabilities of previously created collages, the installation process evolved into an experiential journey. Fragments of Nicosia were used to transform the space itself into a collage, demonstrating collage's multifunctional nature. This transformation allowed the space to serve a dual purpose: assessing the dialogical potential of the collages and providing an experience in collage-making in a space. The chapter argued that collage's unrestricted nature makes it a powerful tool for addressing challenges in contested spaces, offering fresh perspectives and inviting personal engagement and interpretation.

In the exhibition space, the dialogical potential of collage, coupled with its inherently unrestricted nature, became apparent to me. This experience led to the realisation that interpretations of collage can vary significantly, influenced by the individual elements used and the diverse backgrounds of participants. The interaction within this environment was enlightening; it underscored collage's inclusive and unrestricted nature, welcoming all participants regardless of their perspectives on contested spaces. It was observed that participants' comments and interpretations were independent, emphasising the importance of appreciating the diversity of viewpoints they brought to the exhibition. This variety of perspectives, originating from individuals with diverse backgrounds, shed light on the significance of collage in contested spaces, where differing viewpoints can be embraced. Collage provided a platform that can be viewed in different ways, easily capturing various interpretations and viewpoints.

By recontextualising fragments within a physical space, viewers were inspired to connect the collages with their personal experiences, actively engaging with the collaged space. This interaction sparked dialogues and reinterpretations, infusing new meanings into the collages. Collage's expressive nature facilitated the communication of thoughts, emotions, and ideas, providing viewers with a visual vocabulary to articulate their narratives. These interactions demonstrated collage's potential as a direct, personal communication medium, with fragments resonating emotionally and intellectually with individuals. They

highlighted collage's dynamic and interactive nature, suggesting its effectiveness as a tool for enablers for fostering dialogue and understanding in urban environments characterised by contention and complexity, suggesting a unique and common language about the city, encouraging personal engagement, interpretation, and collective exploration.

This creative practice research has thus explored the transformative potential of collage as a medium for engaging with and interpreting contested urban spaces, particularly focusing on Nicosia. Throughout the chapters, I have examined the descriptive, imaginative, interpretative, spatial, and dialogical capacities of collage, while also discovering its other facets, such as being analytical, provocative, and at times, deceptive. Each chapter, while highlighting a specific potential of collage, also complemented and supported the others in showcasing the medium's multifaceted and comprehensive nature. This exploration revealed that collage is not confined to a single attribute but embodies a spectrum of capabilities that offer it an invaluable tool in contested space research.

The collage-based research described in the second part of this thesis provided a fragmented interpretation of the complexity of Nicosia, offering a rich foundation for exploring the intersection of history, culture, and conflict. By highlighting the polyphonic nature of the city's narratives, it encouraged the integration of diverse perspectives. The examination revealed the enduring presence of controversy within the city, despite its division more than five decades ago. Although these elements have become entrenched in everyday life, actively seeking out these traces uncovered narratives of Nicosia's contentious past and its present realities. It was underscored that the city's attempts to address the consequences of this division are impeded by the Buffer Zone, a physical manifestation of the divide. As long as this division line persists, individuals will continue to lead parallel lives within the same city. However, this research appreciates those who strive for peace. Despite serving as the capital for various communities and Cyprus as a whole, Nicosia remains the focal point of these peace efforts. Although the Buffer Zone is a major obstacle to coexistence, it also functions as an alternative space that encourages interaction between communities, hosting events, peace talks and activism. Through collage, this research offered an idea about this zone, generated by the fragments of the city itself.

In addition to theorising collage-making in Nicosia, Part II provided a rich foundation for delving into the intricate dynamics of history, socio-cultural contexts, and conflict within the city. By highlighting Nicosia's fragmented nature, it facilitated the presentation of diverse perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of the city's contested past. Despite the city's division over half a century ago, its fragments continued to echo conflicts and controversies, shedding light on both past struggles and present realities. Moreover, these fragments draw attention to the city's physical and metaphorical barriers, emphasising the challenges faced in addressing the consequences of division, notably the Buffer Zone.

The collages generated insights into the persistent nature of division, highlighting how individuals continue to lead parallel lives within the same city as long as the dividing

line remains. Amidst these challenges, the research also acknowledged the efforts of peacemakers striving to bridge divides. While Nicosia remains the capital for various communities and for Cyprus as a whole, collages indicated that the Buffer Zone fragments serve as a reminder of the ongoing contentious environment. However, despite posing as a barrier to coexistence, the Buffer Zone also functions as an alternative space fostering interaction and dialogue between communities, hosting various events and initiatives. Although it has already been theorised as an alternative space, the research also showed that active engagement with the Buffer Zone is quite challenging. Nonetheless, through collage-making, the research ventured to offer an alternative mode of engagement, presenting an idea rooted in the fragments of the city itself. The collage within the Buffer Zone proposed a reorganization of existing urban fragments, offering a new perspective.

It is important to note that this was a paper proposal, and not a reorganisation of the actual Nicosia. It represented an imaginary Nicosia, a reverie, providing a space open to all discussions, signifying the future potential for the city, symbolised by the everyday materials filling the gaps within the Buffer Zone, preserving memories dating back to division. By recognising the limitations of the city and its situation, this reverie offered an alternative way of thinking in a space that would otherwise be challenging to study. Addressing the city's peace-making endeavors, the collage acknowledged past shortcomings and sought to provide a common ground for divided communities to share, remember collective memories and imagine the future. In this context, as explored in Chapter 6, the furniture store emerged as one interpretation among others, indicating a potential repository of the city's memories for outsiders and a communal space for Cypriots to engage in dialogue, reminisce, and share experiences. Thus, it is important to indicate that it was not merely an architectural proposal but rather a conceptual framework for envisioning a more dialogic environment open to people who are living in the contested spaces of Nicosia and seeking an alternative way to engage, work, coexist, and live together.

This creative practice research also demonstrated that collage can be an effective and versatile tool in contested spaces. It transcends traditional methods of exploration and communication in contested space studies, offering alternative ways through which the complexities and nuances of such environments can be understood and conveyed through the city's fragments. By integrating theoretical perspectives with practical applications, the research underscores collage's ability to capture and articulate the intricacies of urban narratives, encouraging a deeper engagement with and understanding of the dynamic realities of contested spaces. The multifunctional nature of collage, as revealed in this thesis, highlights its significance as a creative and comprehensive methodology in urban studies, offering alternative ways for innovation and exploration for complex and contested fields in a space of dialogue that is never finished but always in progress.

Collage as a medium intertwining research and creative practice to engage with contested spaces

This practice-based research explored the diverse potentials of collage as a creative practice within the context of contested spaces. By employing a five-stage collage-making process and using Nicosia as the testing site, this research guided the theoretical understanding of collage-making in relation to contested spaces. The collages, which were presented in various stages from initial creation to works in progress and the final composition that was considered to be completed for this research, were not only interpreted through my own experiences but also emerged as powerful agents for description, imagination, and interpretation. They served as a spatial and dialogical tool for various actants, including researchers, architects, designers, urbanists, historians, and enablers.

Contested spaces are emblematic of the discordance in accepting differences, often arising from political, social, cultural, or economic conflicts. Fundamentally, they represent an absence of pluralism. Collage, on the contrary, epitomises diversity, flourishing through provocation, discussion, deception, mnemonic processes, forgetting, remembering, emotional resonance, and cultural and social commentary within its visual narratives of a single composition. It is devoid of strict rules or predetermined outcomes, embodying heterogeneity and allowing for a diversity of interpretations, enabling fragmentation, reconstruction, and re-perception. Collage embodies multiplicity and celebrates the harmonious coexistence of differences. This research underscores that when these ostensibly opposing concepts converge, they provide a unique perspective, presenting collage as an alternative way for navigating complex spaces:

- *Collage is a process.*

Collage transcends mere image creation; it is a dynamic and evolving process. This process encompasses a multitude of acts: selecting materials, cutting, playing with fragments, connecting disparate elements, and gluing. These acts are not just physical but also intellectual, involving creation, contemplation, inquiry, experimentation, reflection, and learning. This process is less about reaching a final visual product and more about embracing the process to facilitate research, thought, and interpretation. In contrast to research-centric design, which seeks to formalise the design process, collage-making emphasises creativity and experimentation, striving to yield fresh insights and perspectives. It offers an experiment, spotlighting the potential of multidimensional design research processes that intertwine analytical, reflective, and synthetic phases in an iterative creation.

In my research, the process of collage-making was pivotal. Each step in creating collage sequences was a moment of discovery and reflection, as I recorded in my diary. While researching contested spaces, the act of collage-making became a tool for deep investigation. The fragments, even if eventually covered or removed, played important roles in the research and interpretation of the composition. They represented the moment

of decision and realisation, each influencing the final composition in subtle but significant, paralleling the research process, where each decision impacts the overall understanding and direction of the study.

In Chapter 3, for example, making process transformed into embodiments of historical narratives, prompting a profound questioning of both history and the self. This chapter illustrated how the multiplicity of histories intertwined within contested spaces enriched the act of collage-making. Each fragment evolved during the process, sparking new inquiries. The synthesis of the literature review and material research enabled a broader understanding of Nicosia's multifaceted history, as depicted in various sources. Delving into each fragment uncovered in the process not only enriched the collage-making but also deepened the research. It brought disparate historical accounts onto common ground and also challenged and dismantled my own preconceptions. Similarly, in Chapter 4, the creation of collage sequences involved researching and selecting fragments, which opened my mind to unanticipated narratives. This process allowed me to gain insights into a city I had never physically visited. Thus, the process of engaging with Nicosia's fragments becomes a means to unlock and express previously unvoiced perspectives about the city.

This is also an inherently catalytic process. The collage-making process in Chapter 5, which analytically examines the peace-making projects in Nicosia, triggered the making process of the collage sequences of Chapter 6. In Chapter 5, the process enabled me to introspectively assess my role and capabilities as a collagist-researcher. This introspection acted as a catalyst, fortifying my convictions about the city and prompting me to scrutinise and visualise them. The collage of Chapter 6 symbolises this evolution, showcasing my perspective as a collagist-researcher and, at the same time, embodies an idea I have generated about the untapped potential of Nicosia. Therefore, while a collage might appear as a static image symbolising a final composition on a page, it can be defined as a dynamic embodiment of the ongoing processes of decision-making, research and thinking in the context of this thesis.

Collage embodies a process capable of yielding experimental and unforeseen results. Rather than conforming to a predetermined plan, collage-making evolves organically, building upon one another and showcasing an experimental journey that is difficult to predict from the outset. A prime example of this is found in Chapter 7, where the journey undertaken produced outcomes that highlighted collage as not just a medium, but a subject of research in its own right. In this chapter, an exhibition was curated to probe the dialogical potential of collage, going beyond merely displaying artworks. The experiment extended to exploring how collage can actively shape space. Through making collages in three dimensions, new perspectives for understanding the city emerged, thereby broadening the scope and depth of the research.

The collage-making process, as explored in this research, demonstrates a profound trust in the journey itself, revealing that wisdom emerges from the progression of the work. In this process, there is no absolute right or wrong; rather, it is a tapestry of experiences

and the insights gained from them. Each phase of the process catalyses the next, yielding unexpected outcomes that enrich our understanding of the city and contribute to the emergence of unique urban knowledge. Therefore, creating a collage transcends the pursuit of a final visual product; it represents a nuanced and evolving journey. This analysis, combined with the collagist's heightened awareness, affirms collage as not only a creative endeavour but also a legitimate method of research.

- *Collage provides an alternative space.*

Collage has the capacity to represent a utopian attempt to establish a distinct 'political' entity within ethnically, politically, and socially contested spaces. It emerges as an alternative space in an environment steeped in political tension, serving as an anomaly that offers a vessel of diverse potentialities. Collage becomes a realm of resistance, a space where individuals can gather to contemplate and redefine what constitutes an alternative space for existence, contemplation, discourse, and understanding, free from preconceived notions. Its alternative nature is rooted in inherent inclusivity, distinguishing it from many methods and spaces aimed at addressing issues in contested spaces, which often tend towards exclusivity or lack the required breadth of inclusivity. It orders silently to think in its own free space without any limitations.

The alternative space of collage lies in its inherent inclusiveness, facilitated by the agency of the medium itself. In collage, meaning is not solely imparted by the collagist but also emerges from the interplay between the fragments and their relationship with the viewer. This dynamic shifts according to the viewer's perspective, endowing the collage with a multiplicity of meanings that resonate with its diverse audience without bias. Chapter 7 exemplified this, focusing on an exhibition where the collages meet their audience. Viewers from different backgrounds became part of this collaged space within the exhibition space and interpreted the compositions of the fragments through their own perspectives. For each viewer, it was a different fragment that initiated the dialogue. Many different interpretations of the same collaged image were presented. The collage, however, offered a free space that encouraged various interpretations for all without any judgment.

The visible and invisible gaps between fragments in the collage create 'alternative spaces' within it. These gaps, open to any interpretation, are particularly significant in contested spaces, offering a common ground for discussion and counteracting the impasse in resolving debates. Collage, by collectively presenting contentious issues, fosters unity in diversity. This was experienced in Chapter 6, where ideas and thoughts, typically incongruous, coexist within the same composition. It presents Nicosia's fragments for the viewer's interpretation, with some possibility of seeing references to conflictual history, contemplating the potential of the Buffer Zone, or something more personal. My interpretation as a researcher and collagist is presented as the initial commentary, open to acceptance or rejection, underscoring the collage's role in initiating dialogue. Each detail in the collage carries the potential for unique meaning, offering an alternative perspective to the prevailing state of chaos. Thus, collage is concluded to be an engaging,

discussable, and designable phenomenon, offering a platform for diverse viewpoints and creative solutions.

- *Collage is a dialogue.*

Collage transcends its role as a mere artistic visual production to become a medium for dialogue. It is not only about the bringing together of different elements but also about the conversation that these elements initiate and sustain by creating a common language. In contested spaces where narratives are often fragmented and perspectives varied, collage serves as a mediator, bringing these various narratives together to promote a holistic dialogue. In this context, collage as a dialogue lies in its ability to juxtapose contrasting elements, thereby creating a space for multiple voices. Each piece in a collage can represent a different voice, a unique story or point of view. When these pieces are collaged together in a composition, they retain their individuality, contributing instead to a richer, more nuanced conversation. This juxtaposition goes beyond visual or aesthetic choice. It is a deliberate act of bringing different perspectives closer together to promote understanding and empathy. Collage thus invokes the agency of its viewer, offering a free space for dialogue.

The dialogic nature of collage is dynamic and evolutionary. It does not seek to produce definitive interrogations or final statements. Instead, it provides a space for questions, explorations and ongoing conversations. For instance, the collages created during this research, as discussed in Chapter 7, become microcosms of dialogue within the broader context of Nicosia's contested spaces. These collages not only depicted the physicality of Nicosia but also invited viewers to engage with the city's layered history, texture, and potential. By inviting the viewers to be active participants in a collaged space, it presented a dialogic environment that allowed them to interpret and reinterpret the pieces based on their own experience and knowledge. The dynamic nature of this interaction was evident in the exhibition, where the interplay between the collages and the participants generated diverse interpretations, each adding to the collective understanding of the contested spaces.

- *Collage is a creative practice.*

Collage is fundamentally a dynamic creative process. It places a strong emphasis on creativity and experimentation, seeking to uncover new insights and perspectives. This approach involves an iterative design research process, seamlessly interweaving analytical, reflective, and synthetic phases. Within this framework, collage serves as a platform for inquiry, manifestos, ideas, debates, imagination, speculation, and even the reimagining of urban landscapes. Reflecting on my own collage work, what initially began as an exploration of history has evolved into an alternative space for expressing my unique insights into the city. This evolution occurred organically, without premeditation, and has transformed into a genuine journey. Through this process, I not only produced collaged images but also absorbed, recorded, and visually articulated knowledge about the research context and the city itself. Thus, collage emerges as a dynamic practice of

learning, experiencing, and presenting.

- *Collage is about encounters and juxtapositions.*

Collage involves the convergence of disparate elements, including images, visuals, texts, and found objects, through a process of trials, errors, and repetitions. Collage can manifest as either structured or unstructured, organised or unorganised. It is not bound by a predefined outcome, which allows for unpredictable results and welcomes both successes and failures. While it may appear unsustainable or inefficient, it provides an inclusive and secure space for playfulness and creativity. The inherent discontinuity or incongruity in the composition is not a flaw; rather, it underscores the potential of collage. This juxtaposition of fragments catalyses the emergence of connections and resonances between ideas, fostering a dynamic and associative approach to research. This relationship is not predetermined but evolves through discussion, learning, and experimentation, encouraging a non-linear approach to exploration. In this study, contested areas represent zones where differences collide. Collage, in turn, serves as a medium for these differences to coexist. In doing so, it does not seek a specific rule or order. In creating collages, fragments that may not naturally coexist are juxtaposed within the same artefact, allowing for diverse interpretations. This has enabled concepts that might not naturally align to be integrated into the same discourse. For instance, in the first chapter of the second part, a diverse array of historical narratives, not typically found together in any sources, collectively shape a process that provides a comprehensive interpretation of the history of the conflict in Cyprus.

- *Collage is heterogeneous.*

Collage provides a platform that differs yet simultaneously coexists with its environment. In other words, it is an art form that transcends boundaries and embraces diversity. Its inherent multiplicity necessitates a pluralistic approach, introducing fresh models of representation and interpretation when traditional methods prove inadequate. This phenomenon is encountered not solely as the juxtaposition of different fragments but also as the convergence of conflicting and incongruent ideas. Within the framework of this research, collage nurtures a liberated and comprehensive workspace, unrestricted by conventions, enabling audacious explorations to flourish within the parameters of the research context. In this collage-based study, heterogeneity emerges as a shared characteristic across all collages produced. It allowed all the discussion on Nicosia in a collage without any condition or limitation. Thus, heterogeneity emerges as one of the most notable attributes of collage within contested spaces.

- *Collage is multidisciplinary.*

Collage, through its practice of juxtaposition, provides a platform for the coexistence of various disciplinary discourses. Its lack of strict rules or conditions facilitates the convergence of different fields, positioning practitioners at the intersection of these disciplines. Collage values multiple perspectives, acknowledging non-dominant forms of knowledge and allowing these distinctions to coexist harmoniously. It blurs binaries and

boundaries, encouraging the synthesis of different perspectives and contributing to a holistic understanding of complex phenomena. Rather than seeking a unified body of knowledge, collage embraces a heterogeneous field of coexisting and competing images and ideas, fostering dialectical tension and cultural transformation. In the context of this research, collage has not confined itself to architecture or urban planning; throughout the process of creating collages, various disciplines such as history, sociology, and anthropology have been integral subjects of discussion. In Chapter 5, where the practice was tested, urban planning strategies were discussed alongside an exploration of the societal conflicts and their impact on the city. This highlights the coexistence of multiple disciplines within the realm of collage practice.

- *Collage is questioning and interrogative by nature.*

In this design-based research, it is evident that collage-making does not seek to arrive at a predetermined outcome. Instead, making collages fosters an environment that encourages the interrogation of the research problem itself. When employed as a research method, collage prompts a series of inquiries throughout the design process, aiming to uncover and understand. Rather than seeking 'solutions' to research problems, it poses 'questions' about the origins of these problems and the requisite knowledge needed to address them.

Collage possesses the capacity to 'shock and surprise', challenging established thinking by juxtaposing seemingly disparate elements, thereby giving rise to novel perspectives and insights. It promotes critical self-reflection and extends an invitation to viewers to scrutinise their own perspectives and actions in relation to their surroundings and fellow inhabitants. Within the framework of this research, collage has not only steered the course of inquiry but has propelled it forward. Each collage is constructed upon the interrogation of its predecessor, and every chapter is founded on the questioning of the preceding stage. The collages shaped in the latter part of this research have also played a formative role in the direction of the research. The themes that emerged during the collage-making process spurred curiosity, leading to a quest for corresponding information about the city in written sources. In the test area expounded upon in Chapter 7, these inquiries were further amplified by engagement with the audience, visibly altering the research trajectory. Crucially, however, it has also facilitated uncharted city exploration, giving voice to hitherto unexplored queries. For example, it introduced a new perspective to the analysis of peace-making projects in Chapter 5. While each project emphasised that a non-political environment might be the sole solution, the collage-making process suggested that political conflicts could also be integral to this process.

- *Collage is for everyone.*

Collage-making is a practice unbounded by rules, conditions, prerequisites, or specific demands. It does not aspire to achieve a definitive end image. Instead, it is a flexible medium that can be moulded to suit the context of a given subject, with the act of creating a collage often guiding the exploration of the subject matter itself. Particularly

in the realm of contested spaces, this approach is intrinsically inclusive. Collage operates independently of commitments or written regulations, positioning itself as an impartial facilitator amidst conflict. It serves not only as a fertile ground for creativity but also as a platform for discourse, with the extent of discussion being limited only by one's perception. It partakes in political discourse through a form of silent dialogue.

As such, collage-making is an accessible pursuit for everyone. It enables individuals or societies with divergent or even seemingly irreconcilable ideologies to engage in their unique dialogues within the same collage framework. Rather than provoking confrontation, collage fosters an atmosphere conducive to inquiry and understanding, where voices are not raised but rather blended in a visual conversation. In the context of this research, the collages in Chapter 3 exemplify this inclusivity from my own perspective. As a researcher-collagist and the initial interpreter, I found myself compelled to confront my own background and research, leading to the emergence of fresh perspectives born from this introspection.

Furthermore, the process of collage-making in Chapter 3 also highlighted collage's potential as an inclusive medium for historians working in contested spaces to examine alternative perspectives from a broader context. The processes explored in Chapters 4 and 5 pointed out collage's potential as a valuable tool for urban planners and urbanists. The collages in Chapter 6 resonated particularly with designers, while Chapter 7 suggested that collage as a suitable medium for enablers seeking a comprehensive, unbiased, and free working environment in contested spaces. Overall, my own collage experiments in this research underscore collage's general applicability and its role as a versatile medium across various fields and discussions, particularly in settings marked by complexity and contention.

Collage-based research in contested spaces

In creative practice, knowledge is an integral component, personalised and embodied within the collagist and their act of collage-making. Once the creative process concludes, this knowledge may fade from the collagist's memory. Thus, the knowledge generated in this process is ephemeral; it lacks external evaluation, validation, or dissemination. This presents a challenge, as practical knowledge in creative processes defies easy textual capture. Moreover, the knowledge conveyed through collage depends on its viewer. Thus, collage does not represent singular or specific knowledge. It can serve as a testament to the process of knowledge production or a repository of unverifiable knowledge. The scarcity of literature on practice-based research emphasises how research integrated with creative practice may seem unconventional. Practice-based research delves into the creative processes and actions that shape the research and communicates them not only through artefacts but also through text. Both forms - text and artefacts - serve as conduits for sharing profound insights on a subject.

When I embarked on exploring collage as a research method in contested spaces, I discovered that examining one's own creative practice is not foreign to academia.

Lebbeus Woods' work became leading research for me. Woods employed his own distinctive expressions to create projects in contentious areas and presented them in an academic context. His work illuminates the interplay between academic research and creative practice, demonstrating how they can mutually reinforce each other. Comparing Woods' work on Sarajevo with my own, it is evident that creative practice has served as the catalyst and generator of research in both cases. Yet, in my case, as both a researcher and a collagist, I not only learned about collage but also documented and theorised the practice as part of this knowledge production. While Woods internally navigated the process, presenting the production as a thinking practice rather than a definitive outcome, my research centres on practice and, I hope, is substantiated by accounts of the practice and my conclusions. Unlike Woods' concepts, which project and propose a way of life, my work has provided an alternative working platform.

Although my approach parallels Woods' methodology, there is a difference in positioning. Woods' work, while situated in both the practical and academic realms, is presented as advice - *an alternative way of living* - neither strictly academic nor purely practical. Simultaneously, Woods' political stance is explicitly articulated in his project. It is, therefore, too politically oriented to be a purely academic study and too rigorously researched to be a practical recommendation. In my work, however, a political reticence stemming from my own background has resulted in a more restrained attitude in my collage work. Despite approaching the research process from multiple perspectives, I have grappled with the biases inherent in my upbringing, opting for a cautious approach to avoid academic misdirection. Hence, while actively immersed in the study of collage and contested spaces, I have not been able to adopt as overtly political a stance as Woods proposes in my research.

Collage is a practice with no end and no rules. Despite at times being fixed in space, it remains inherently adaptable. This journey has significantly shaped my approach to collage creation, particularly in research, prompting me to consider the viewer and the exhibition as crucial testing grounds. Before commencing this research, I harboured uncertainties about the impact of the viewer on my collage work, particularly once the exhibition was installed and the collages inhabited the space. I grappled with the notion that - since my personal choices shaped the collages - the exhibition catered to the personal interests of the viewer. Thus, I questioned how the perspectives of participants might contribute to my work or influence this research. Through this process, I learned to broaden my perspective on creative work. I realised that my creation extended beyond the collages to encompass the holistic experience of collage-making, including the exhibition space and its surroundings.

With the aid of diverse research methodologies and documentation tools, I could thoroughly analyse and comprehend the potential of my creative practice in collage within contested spaces. Throughout the creation of each collage, I was not only conveying my ideas and manipulating fragments but also attuned to the material's response, influencing my manipulation and expression in the creative process. In the culmination of this process,

the manipulated fragment and the expressed thoughts converged in diverse compositions. The fragments within the collages, when contextualised, possessed distinctive qualities capable of influencing the viewer's interpretation.

Moreover, my reflective diary became a written repository, offering insight into my creative processes and other thoughts during the journey. As a researcher, this documentation was indispensable in realising how to apply and analyse my creative processes as research-relevant data. In my role as a practitioner, the various means of documentation fostered a critical approach towards my own artistic processes. Ultimately, as a collagist-researcher, I was not able to use these diverse approaches, including literature, surveys, and interviews, to understand my creative practice as collecting and discussing the data. Thus, my practice itself became a methodology of this research.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this research are specific to this particular inquiry. Another collagist-researcher conducting a similar project with identical research questions would likely produce different outcomes. Nonetheless, this does not imply that the knowledge derived from exploring collage practice is exclusive or insular. On the contrary, fellow practitioners and researchers can glean valuable insights from my journey as they seek to refine their own creative practices. Moreover, such research not only holds the potential to enhance approaches to designing or creating collages but also can serve as a model for developing the practitioner-researcher relationship in diverse realms of practice-based research, offering guidance and insights beyond the realm of collage.

This design-based research centres on collage and its potential as an alternative mode of engagement within contested spaces. Given its experimental nature, it elicits not only answers but also new inquiries. The research problem and process have evolved, giving rise to new questions in the ongoing quest for understanding. The insights garnered in this chapter represent the unfolding potential of collage. As a collagist-researcher, I could have traversed different paths or experimented with diverse collage techniques. Yet, given collage's boundless nature, these queries will forever remain open. Thus, while the research chapter may conclude, the collage process endures, offering ongoing insights for future research endeavours.

While this research concludes its exploration of Nicosia and collage-making, it is important to recognise that such genealogical inquiry remains an ongoing endeavour. Collage, by its very nature, is boundless, and thus, this collage-based research does not seek a predetermined outcome. By adopting a collage perspective to navigate the complexities of space, power, and knowledge, this thesis transcended the confines of its initial testing ground, unveiling processes that would have otherwise remained obscure. The contested spaces of Nicosia were instrumental in this inquiry, shedding light on the potential of collage in engaging with research on contested spaces.

In the context of Nicosia and Cyprus, a more pertinent discussion than the Cyprus Problem itself revolves around an examination of the terms and conditions that have

framed this discourse, along with the debates it has overshadowed. Collage provides a platform for re-evaluating this environment - a political arena that fosters discourse but refrains from endorsing conflict. While the collage reflects this struggle, only the individual truly comprehends its nuances. This space is inherently diverse, flourishing amidst differences, and opposed to a monolithic and uniform narrative. Future research may delve into the limitations of public participation, as well as the marginalisation and suppression of voices and political agency, employing a collage-based participatory approach to scrutinise this space.

This thesis has presented collage as a medium for description, critique, analysis, interpretation, and imagination, acknowledging the coexistence of phenomena across various scales. It has expanded the realm of collage-making through the conceptualisation of the 'alternative,' illustrating how this broader spatial perspective can inform the study of divided cities and their dynamics, boundaries, and the dynamics of peace and conflict. This thesis extends an invitation to researchers in contested space studies, urging them to employ collage in examining diverse historical and contextual spaces. Through such explorations, spatial thinking can be enriched and expanded, revealing discontinuities, deviations, silences, probing irregularities, contingencies, and errors that have shaped our perceptions of what we consider to be given and unchangeable.

To End,

Collage is my language.

And when I am speaking, I have some moments.

These are the in-between spaces of realisation, where ambivalence and ambiguity thrive.

The obscurities, enigmas, and ambivalences witnessed in Nicosia exemplify contested spaces, the very core I aim to grasp.

Collage marks the juncture when Nicosia's uprising transcended its perceived narrative, hinting at a potential uncharted path.

In this process, three pivotal lessons emerge.

Firstly, the once stark contours of contested spaces dissolve within the collage.

Boundaries assume a more subdued presence, allowing us to discern the interplay between collage and other elements, typically shrouded from view.

Interpretation becomes imperative as we immerse ourselves in the act, projecting our own insights.

Yet, collage prompts us to acknowledge our role in shaping the narrative—a departure from mere passive reception.

Secondly, collage is a paradoxical revelation, concealing even as it unveils, birthing potential worlds through the fusion of fragments.

It embodies a dynamic mode of thought, eschewing fixity for fluidity.

It emerges from the crevices of critical thinking, resurrecting the marginalised and forgotten, taking root in the domains of our world.

Last but not least, collage offers an unconventional approach to reconsidering contested spaces, challenging the dynamics between coloniser and colonised.

It introduces alternative imagery that disrupts the established order, concurrently reshaping our perspectives and worlds.

It engages with both the tangible and imagined—cities and texts—seeking to dismantle and reassemble fragments without erasing diversity, rationale, or identity.

Collage delves into border work, forging a new cultural narrative that embraces radical openness and hybridity.

It seeks meeting grounds where ground-breaking events can transpire, advocating for a politics of de-territorialization and reconnection.

Here, debates on space, its confines, exclusions, and internments evolve into a silent dialogue in the spaces between fragments.

This exploration extends to postmodern culture, dissecting the shifts in geography and the heterotologies that define the contemporary era.

It probes the intersections between material, spatial practices, representations of space, and the lived experiences within these representations.

Echoing Edward Soja's terminology, it navigates through firstspace, secondspace, and thirdspace.

In collage, there is nothing new under the sun.

Through existing fragments, it offers a possible reverie of an impossible reality.

And so, there exists but one conceivable conclusion for this collage-based research:

To Be Continued...¹

¹ From my collage diary on 25 March 2023.

Collage Book with the echoes of Calvino's Clarice

The following collages, included here at the conclusion serve as a unique and symbolic purpose. They are not merely visual appendices or illustrative supplements to the research conducted. Instead, these collages embody the concept of perpetual evolution and the inexhaustible nature of inquiry.

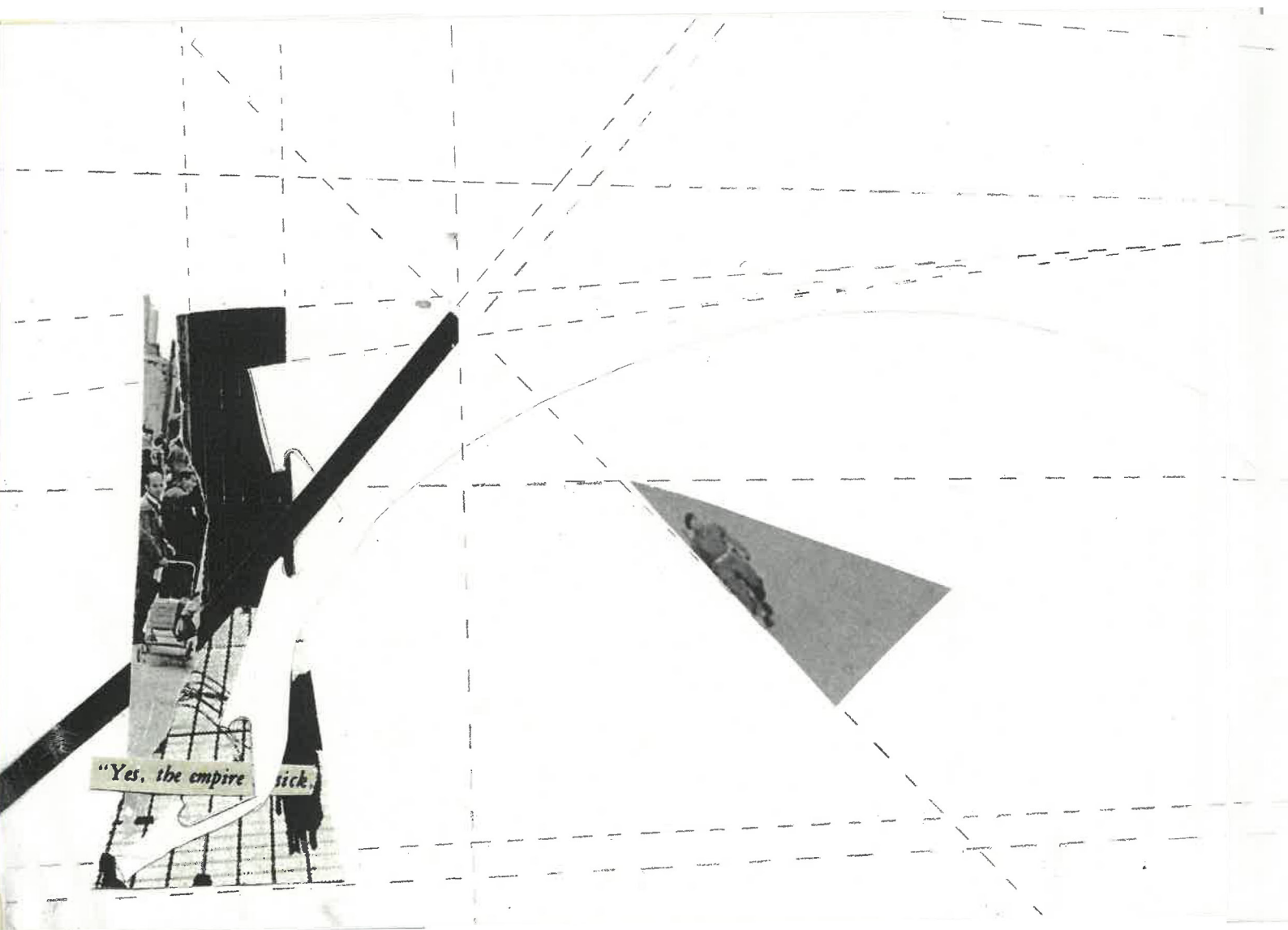
Each collage, while stemming from the context of this research, stands as an unfinished dialogue, a silent yet potent conversation with the reader. They are not final statements, but open-ended questions, inviting interpretation and reflection. Their presence here is not to assert conclusions, but to suggest the continuity of thought and the unending journey of exploration.

While their direct contribution to the research might be open to interpretation, their role transcends conventional academic boundaries. They are a testament to the idea that knowledge and understanding are not static endpoints but dynamic processes. By including them, this thesis does not draw to a close; rather, seeks to open a space for ongoing intellectual engagement.

I present these collages with the hope that they spark curiosity, provoke thought, and offer a moment of aesthetic contemplation. May they serve as a reminder that the pursuit of knowledge is an ever-evolving tapestry, rich with potential and unbound by the finality of completion.

capitals could
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with basil



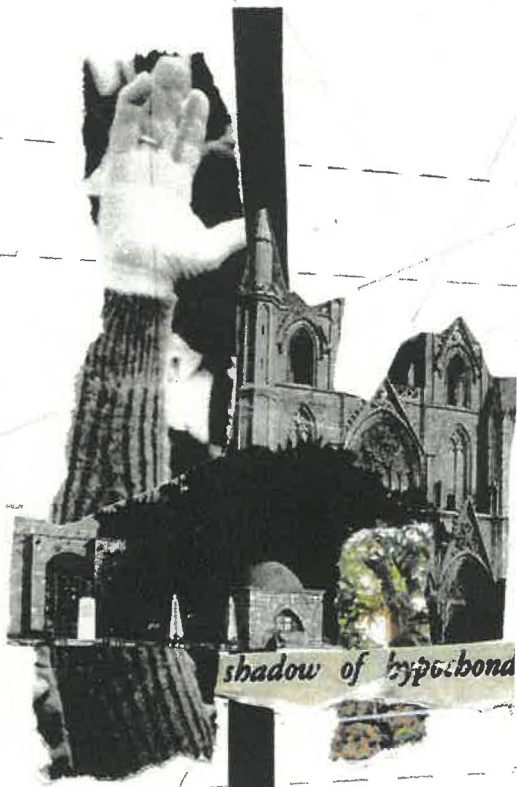


"Yes, the empire is sick."

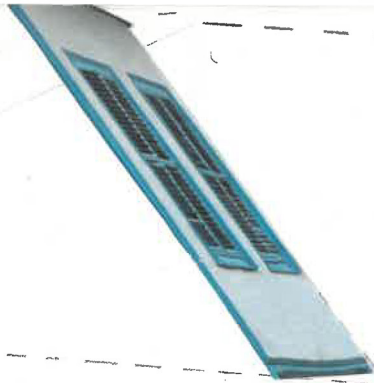


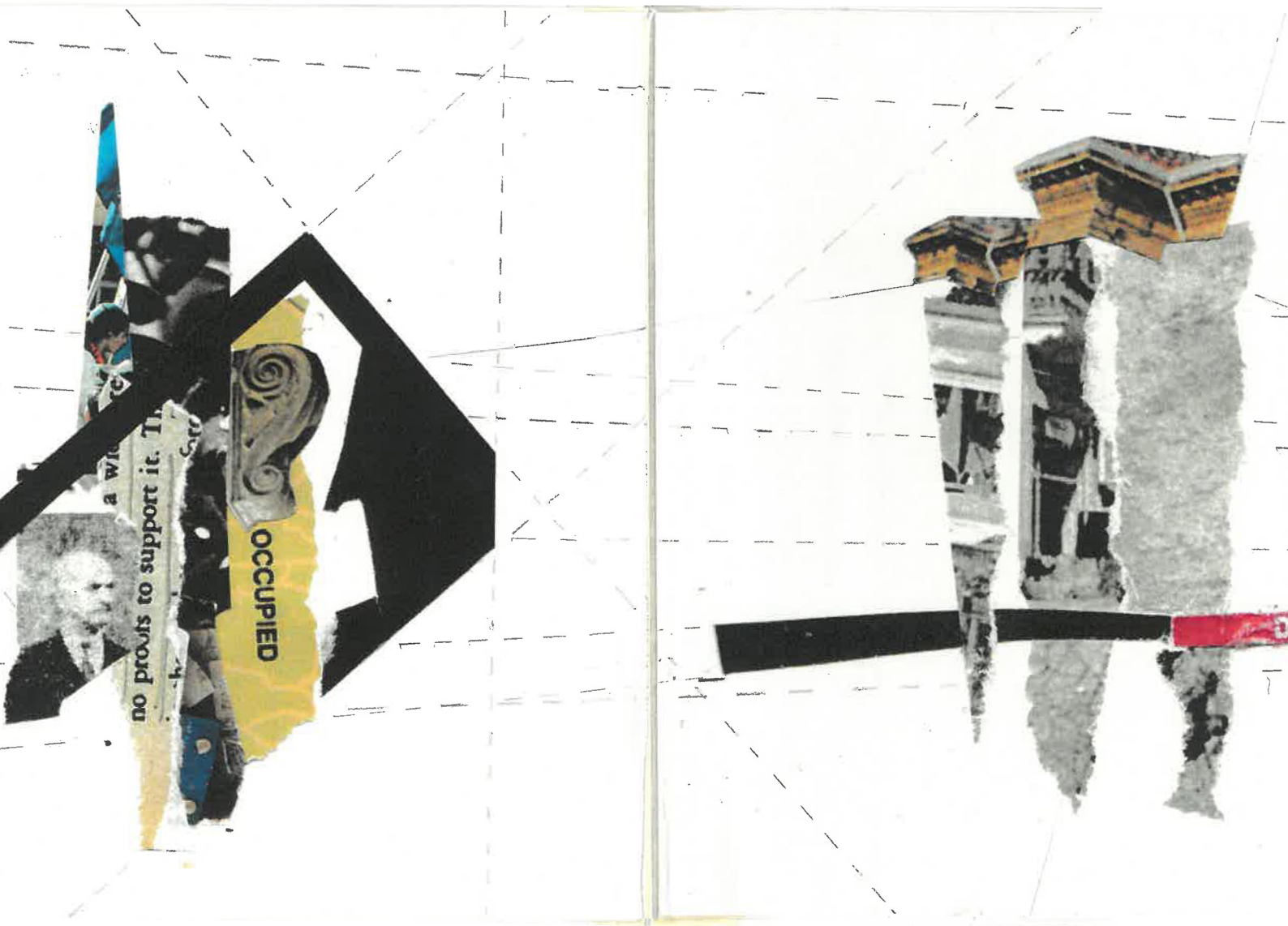
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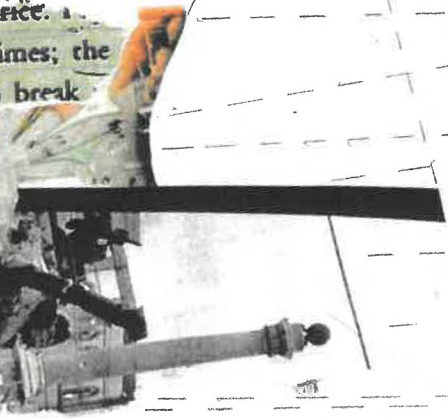


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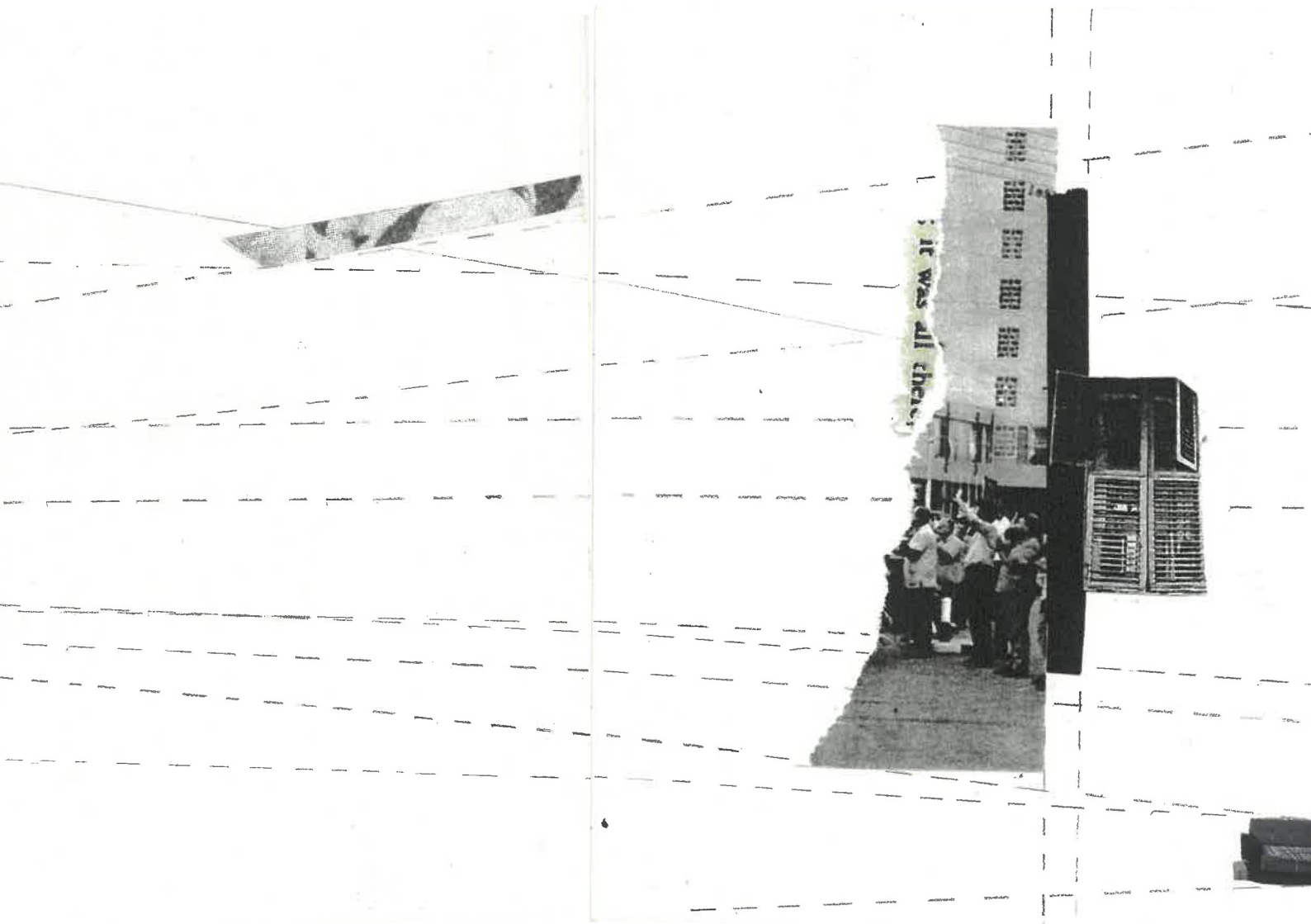
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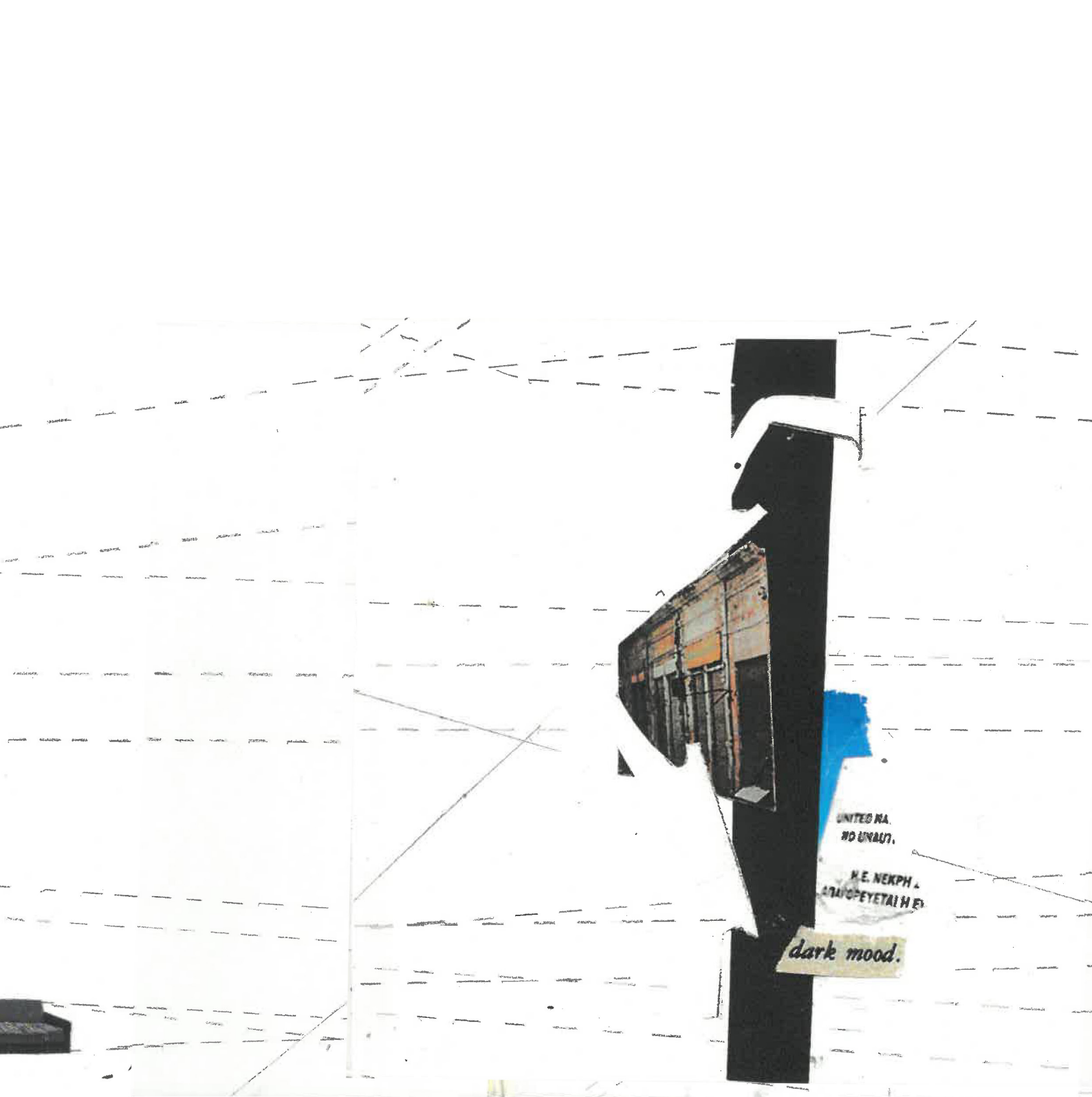


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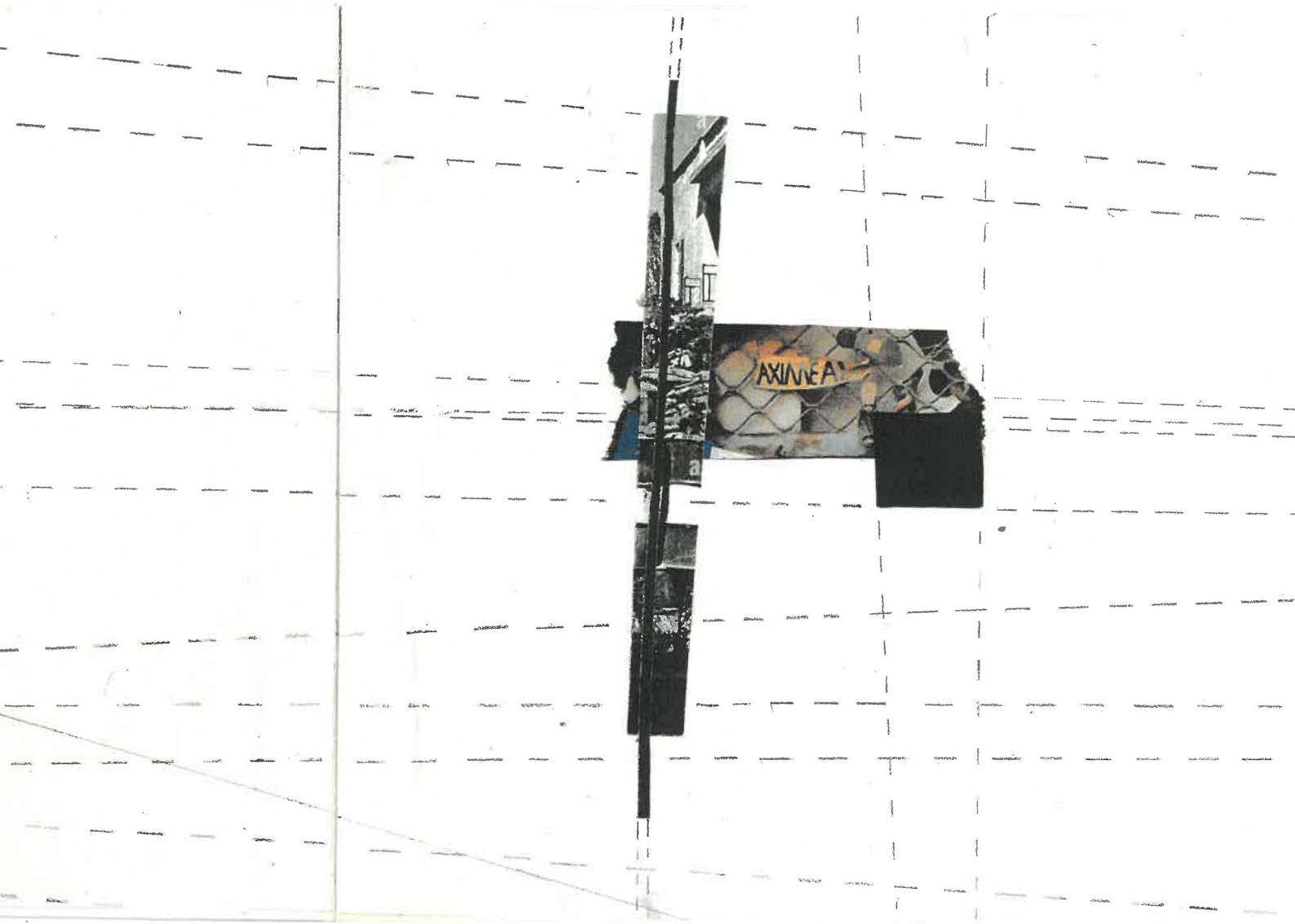




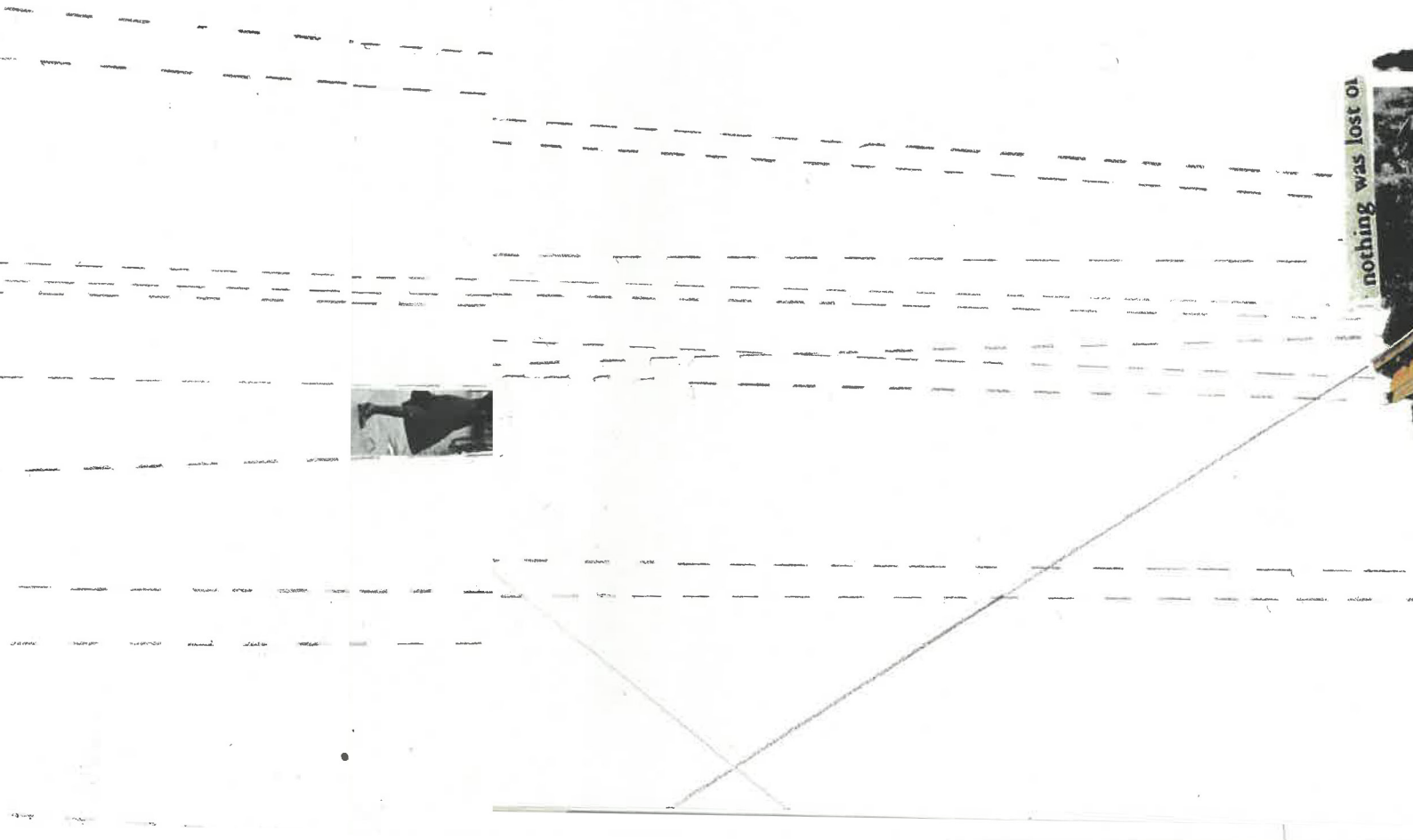
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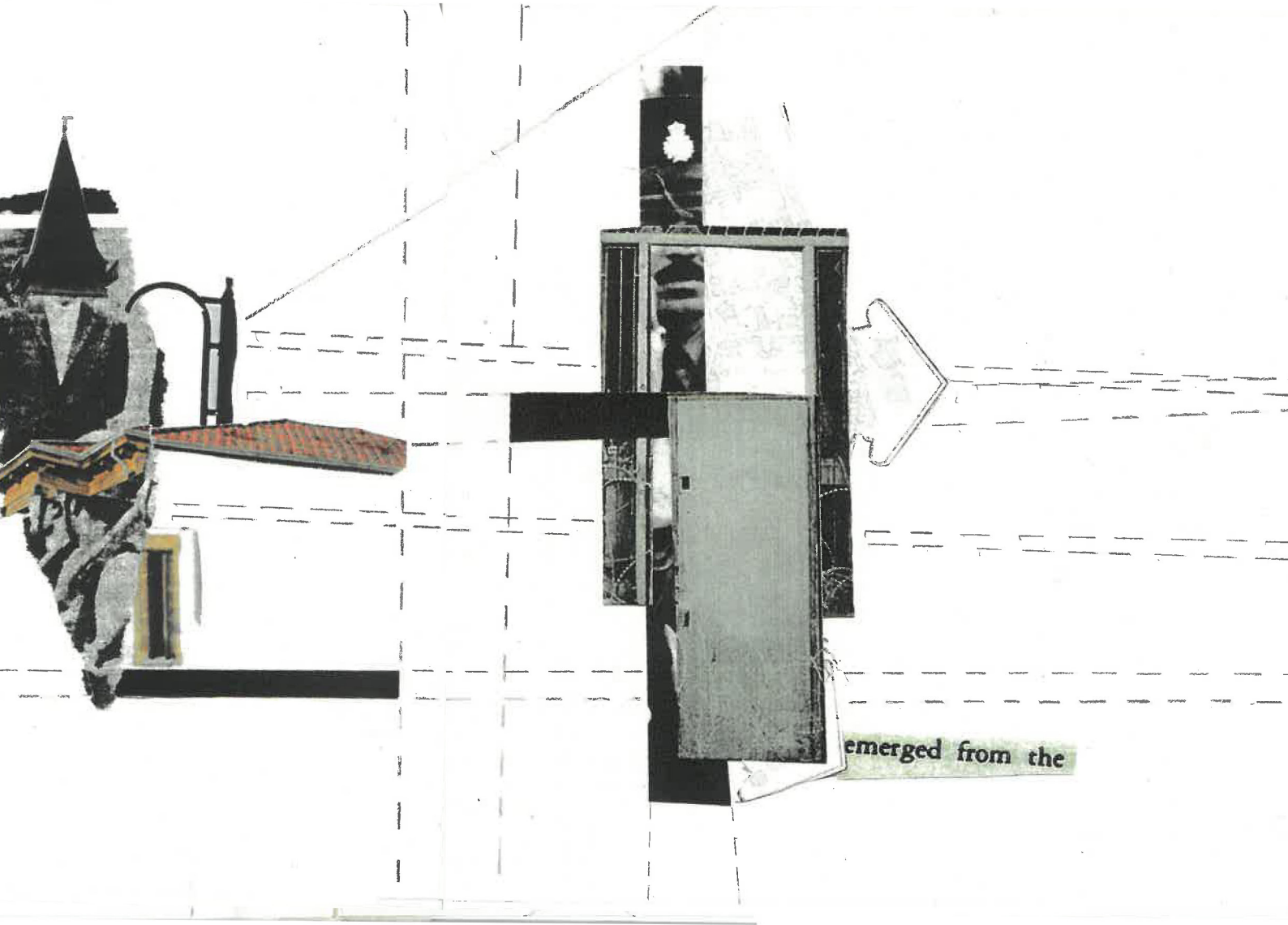
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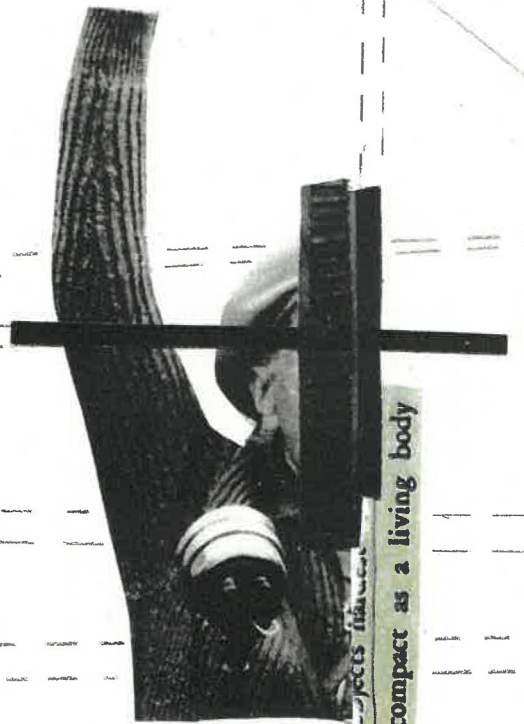


nothing was lost 01





emerged from the



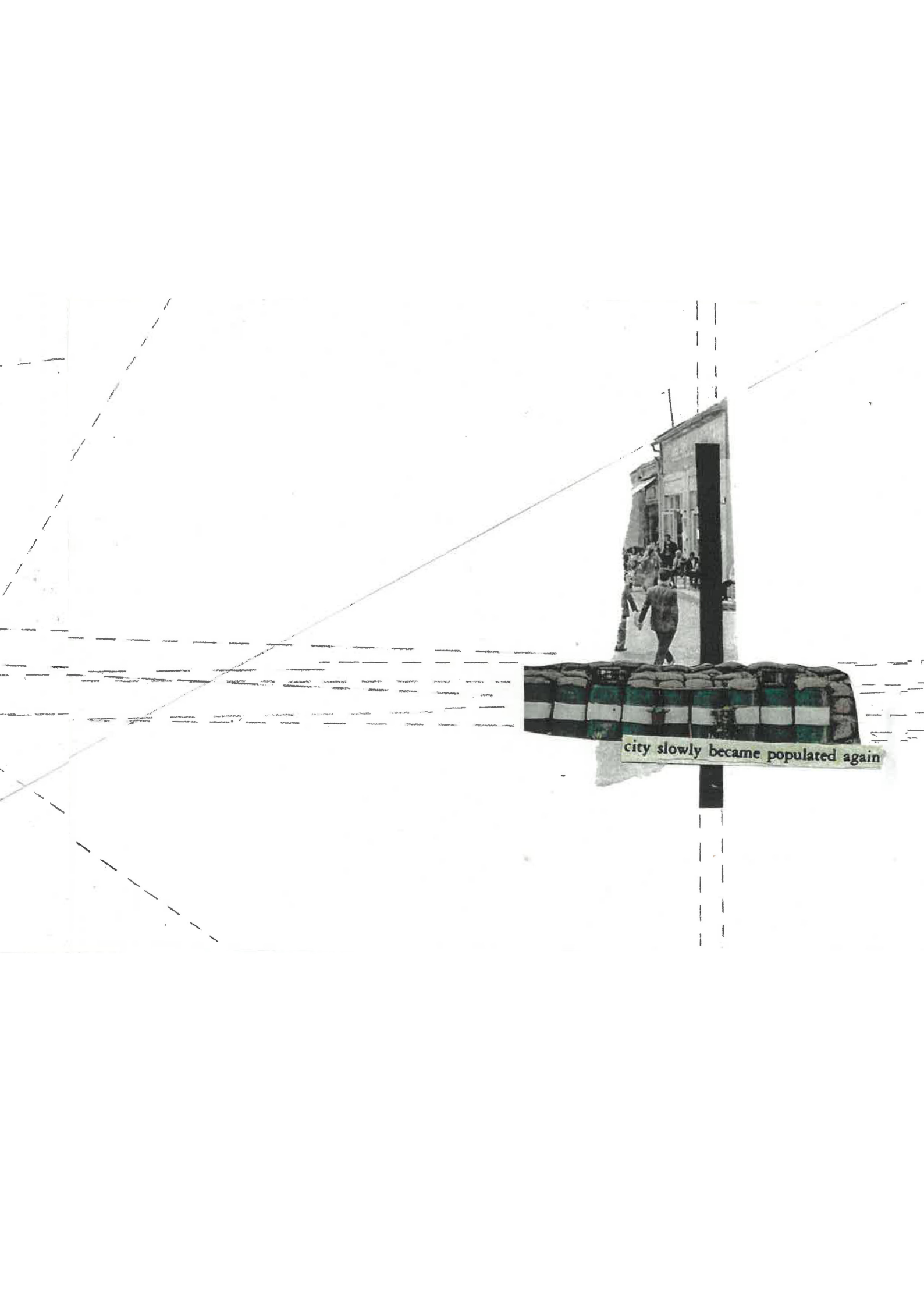
Subjects illustrate compact as a living body

rotting like a corpse in
fects the crows that peck it
us, fertilized by its humors.



A black and white photograph featuring a hand holding a dark, rectangular object. The background is filled with a grid of dashed lines that intersect to form a perspective of a three-dimensional space. The hand is positioned in the lower right quadrant, with fingers wrapped around the object. The overall composition is abstract and geometric.

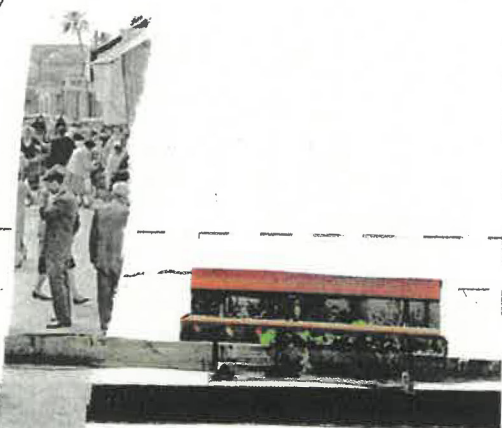
They grabbed everything that could



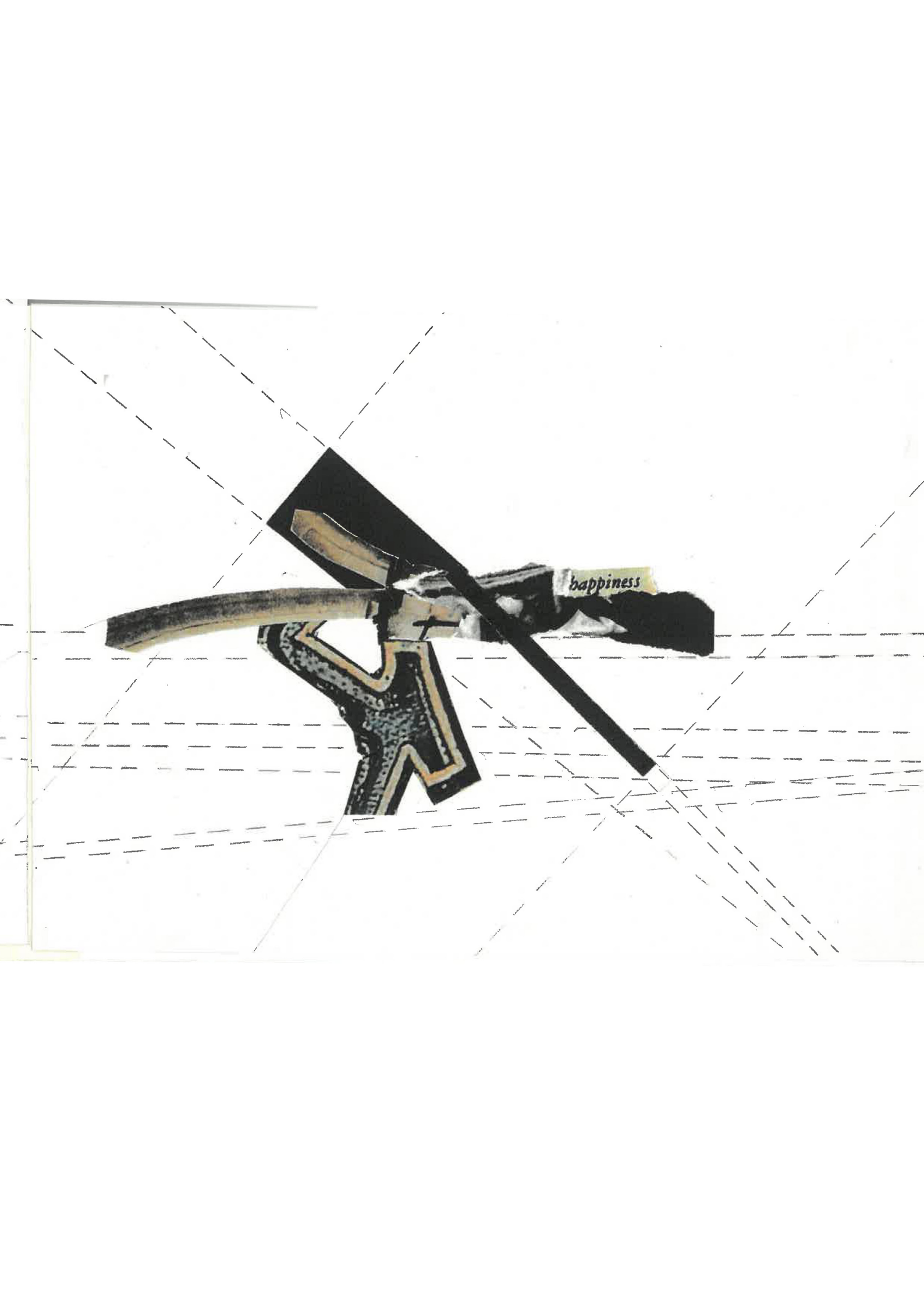
city slowly became populated again



as the survivors



the inhabitants



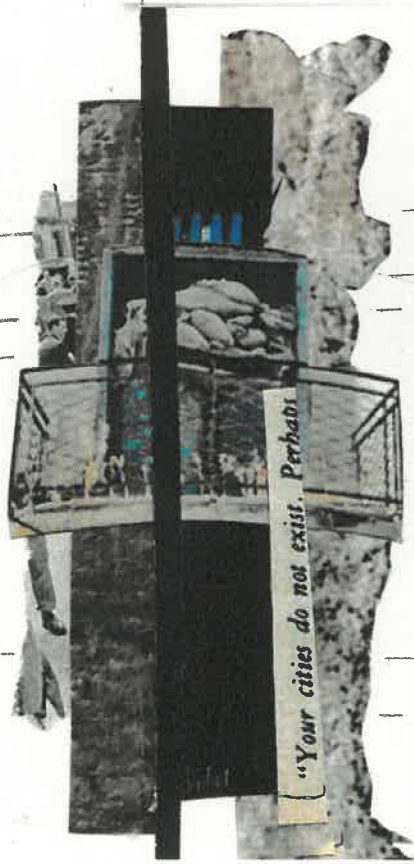
happiness

At other times.

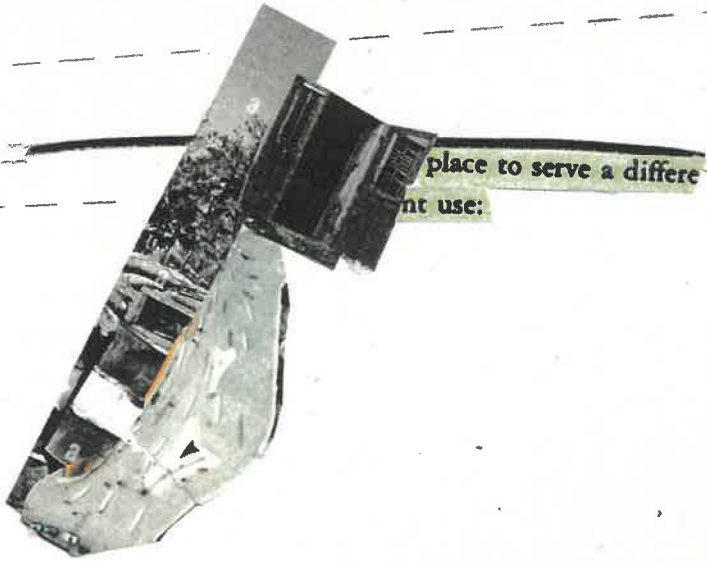


aim of my explorations: examining the traces





"Your cities do not exist. Perhaps"



place to serve a different use:

Epilogue

This epilogue offers a final reflection on my experimental approach that I have undertaken throughout the research. I aim to distil lessons learned through the practice of collage, offering a concise account of how this method has informed both my research process and the exploration of contested spaces. I provide a detailed reflection on the methodology employed as well as a comparative analysis of how collage intersects with other contemporary artistic practices within contested environments.

Revisiting the collage process, this epilogue also returns to the broader context of contemporary creative interventions in contested spaces, drawing connections between collage methodology and similar artistic efforts aimed at fostering dialogue and understanding across divisions. In keeping with the experimental and often serendipitous nature of collage, this acknowledges how my methods continually evolved, circling around, yielding insights not fully apparent earlier. Thus, my epilogue concludes with a final summary collage which enriches and extends the exploration of contested spaces as sites of meaning-making and dialogue.

Insights from thesis

This division of Nicosia has resulted in different ways of life and social structures on either side of the city's "green line", which has sometimes also served as a meeting point for joint projects. My personal experiences in Nicosia allowed me to better understand these boundaries. With potential to question and reshape spatial and social relationships imposed by division, collage illustrates the interplay between architecture and society, contributing as a creative research tool in contested territories.

The collage-making process theorised in this thesis integrates fragments, drawings, and sequential visuals experimentally to unite concepts and designs, introducing an alternative working method that is adaptable and interdisciplinary. As a transformative tool that fosters dialogue across disciplines, collage's fragmented nature permits it to disrupt conventional narratives and generate innovative perspectives on the political, social, and cultural dimensions of contested spaces. In reframing urban division, collage transforms fragmented realities into deep urban imaginaries, awakening new possibilities for understanding and envisioning contested territories.

Creative engagements at borders

The use of creative practices in contested spaces is not new; it has evolved into a dynamic field where artists and architects adapt their mediums to foster dialogue, empathy, and reflection rather than imposing fixed solutions or singular perspectives. Shaped by unique social, cultural, and political challenges, contested spaces compel practitioners to tailor their approaches, addressing complexities through innovative and responsive methods. While mediums and techniques vary, these creative interventions share a common goal: to establish spaces for engagement that challenge rigid divisions and invite individuals to question, connect, and reimagine their environments.

By doing so, these practices offer the transformative potential of art and architecture as tools for deconstructing entrenched narratives and envisioning new possibilities within contested spaces.

This research situates collage within this broader context of contemporary artistic engagements, offering a framework to understand their methodologies and intentions. A notable example already discussed in this thesis is Lebbeus Woods' Sarajevo Project, which reimagined architecture as a cinematic and speculative medium for recovery in a war-torn city. Woods' architectural drawings did not prescribe solutions but instead invited reflection and interpretation, allowing viewers to engage with Sarajevo's scars on their own terms. His work underscored the capacity of creative practice to challenge conventional narratives of division and destruction, emphasising the importance of conceptual and physical spaces that promote healing, interaction, and dialogue.

In the context of Nicosia itself, the buffer zone has served as an alternative space for numerous projects, events, and performances, creating a site where divided communities can come together and interact. *Home for Cooperation* (H4C), for instance, organises social and cultural events that provide a neutral meeting ground for Greek and Turkish Cypriots, fostering trust and dialogue. This initiative demonstrates that art can be a conduit for connection. Likewise, the Buffer Fringe Festival uses the Nicosia buffer zone as a space for creative engagement, inviting diverse groups to participate in shared artistic expressions across political divides. Through performance arts and theatre, the festival fosters empathy and mutual understanding, emphasizing art's potential to bridge physical divisions and promote community-building.

While this thesis primarily focuses on Nicosia and Sarajevo, the application of creative practices in contested spaces extends far beyond these examples. Each unique context inspires diverse artistic responses that engage with the complexities of division. One compelling example is Francis Alÿs' *The Green Line* (2004), a performative and conceptual art project that explores the psychological and social implications of boundaries in Jerusalem.¹ In this work, Alÿs traced the Green Line with green paint, making an often-invisible boundary tangibly visible. This ephemeral gesture highlights the dual nature of borders as both physical demarcations and psychological constructs. By documenting this act, Alÿs emphasizes how boundaries, even when unseen, shape perceptions, interactions, and daily experiences. The work engages audiences by transforming an abstract political division into an accessible visual metaphor, encouraging reflections on the societal impacts of borders. Through its transient nature, *The Green Line* underscores the tension between the personal and collective experiences of contested spaces, offering a poignant commentary on how art can question and reshape understandings of division.

1 Hossein Amirsadeghi and Maryam Homayoun Eisler, eds., *Art and Patronage: The Middle East* (Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2010); Francis Alÿs, *Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing* (Mexico City: Alÿs Studio, 1997); Francis Alÿs, *The Green Line* (Jerusalem, Israel, 2004).



1 - Francis Alÿs, *The Green Line*, 2004, Jerusalem.

This still from *The Green Line* video project shows Francis Alÿs tracing Jerusalem's contested Green Line with green paint. The scene juxtaposes Alÿs' subtle, performative act with the stark militarised setting, as an Israeli soldier and flag dominate the frame. The tension between the ephemeral gesture of marking the boundary and the authoritative presence of the checkpoint captures the psychological weight of borders. The image seems provocative, highlighting the divide between the personal, reflective act of art and the imposing power of physical borders.

In 2017, French photographer and street artist JR created two thought-provoking projects that explored the concept of borders at the US-Mexico divide. The first, *Giants: Kikito and the Border Patrol*, featured an enormous photograph of a child, Kikito, installed on the border fence at Tecate. The child's face, peeking over the barrier, symbolised innocence, and curiosity, prompting viewers to reflect on the arbitrariness and human impact of borders. The scale of Kikito's image, juxtaposed with border patrol officers in the vicinity, highlighted the tension between human vulnerability and institutional enforcement. The second project, *Migrants: Picnic Across the Border*, turned the border into a site of unity rather than division. On the final day of the *Giants* installation, JR organised a picnic where Kikito's family and hundreds of participants from both sides of the border fence came together to share a meal. A long table, adorned with the eyes of a "Dreamer" - representing undocumented migrants who entered the U.S. as children - stretched across the border.² For a few hours, music and shared food bridged the divide, transforming the space into one of connection and empathy.³ Together, these works challenged the notion of borders as rigid divides, offering an alternative vision of inclusion and collective humanity.⁴

2 JR, 'Giants, Kikito', <https://www.jr-art.net/projects/giants-border-mexico>, 2017.

3 JR, 'Migrants, Picnic Across the Border', <https://www.jr-art.net/projects/migrants-picnic-across-the-border>, 2017; JR, 'Giants, Kikito'.

4 Molly McGarry, 'JR's Art That Crosses Borders', *New York Times*, 2017; JR, *Inside Out: The People's Art Project*. (New York: Abrams, 2013).



2 - JR, *Giants, Kikito and the Border Patrol*, 2017, US-Mexico Border

In *Giants: Kikito and the Border Patrol*, JR presents the child Kikito playfully interacting with the border fence, as though holding it in place. His gaze, directed towards the U.S., contrasts with the watchful posture of two border patrol officers on the other side. The installation underscores the tension between Kikito's innocence and the rigid enforcement of boundaries, inviting viewers to question the human cost of division.



3 - JR, *Migrants, Picnic Across the Border*, 2017, US-Mexico Border

An aerial view of *Picnic Across the Border* captures participants gathering on both sides of the US-Mexico border. A long table spans the divide, adorned with the image of a "Dreamer" and complemented by the presence of Kikito's monumental photograph in the background.

Similarly, architects Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello introduced an innovative approach to the U.S.-Mexico border with their 2019 Teeter-Totter Wall installation.⁵ This project featured temporary seesaws placed through gaps in the border wall, allowing children and adults from both sides to play together. By enabling direct interaction, the installation transformed the border from a rigid political boundary into a site of shared human experience. The seesaws physically connected two divided territories, subverting the perception of the border as an impenetrable barrier and demonstrating how simple acts of connection can challenge deep divisions. Through this playful yet profound gesture, Rael and San Fratello reimagined the border as a space where collaboration and shared humanity could flourish. The installation underscored the transformative potential of human interaction, emphasizing that boundaries - often viewed as obstacles - can also create opportunities for dialogue and unity. This simple act of play reframed the perception of the border, not as a place of separation, but as a site of possibility and hope, where even the smallest interactions can bridge significant divides.



4 - Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, *Teeter-Totter Wall Installation*, 2019, US-Mexico Border.

Children and adults from opposite sides of the U.S.-Mexico border engage with seesaws that span the wall, converting the boundary into a shared space of connection and play. The installation presents a striking juxtaposition of simplicity and profundity, challenging the rigidity of the border while offering a poignant symbol of unity through human interaction.

Mexican artist Marcos Ramírez Erre critiques the deceptive and constructed nature of borders through his 1997 sculpture *Toy-an Horse*. Drawing a parallel to the legendary Trojan horse, Erre reinterprets the concept of deception by presenting a massive two-headed horse positioned at the U.S.-Mexico border. However, unlike its mythological counterpart, which concealed a hidden threat, Erre's horse serves as a bold symbol of confrontation, exposing the false sense of security and permanence often associated with borders. This monumental installation

⁵ Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (University of California Press, 2017); Rael San Fratello, *Transforming the Border Wall into a Teeter-Totter* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2020).

challenges preconceived notions of separation and safety, encouraging audiences to question the artificiality of boundaries and their psychological impacts. By situating the two-headed horse in a politically charged space, Erre underscores the need to critically examine not just the physical demarcation of borders but also the ideologies and fears that sustain them. Through its imposing presence, Toy-an Horse invites viewers to reflect on how these divisions shape collective consciousness, revealing the fragility and arbitrariness of borders as markers of identity and safety.⁶



5 - Horse, Marcos Ramírez Erre, *Toy-an Horse*, 1997, US-Mexico Border.

This photograph captures the imposing Toy-an Horse installation at the U.S.-Mexico border. The two-headed horse, set against the stark backdrop of the boundary, symbolically questions the notions of security and permanence, inviting viewers to reconsider the artificial constructs of borders and their psychological resonance

Architects Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman present a unique approach to bridging communities along the San Diego-Tijuana border by intertwining architectural design with principles of social justice.⁷ Through their leadership of the UCSD Community Stations, a cross-border platform for community-based research and cultural initiatives, they have created projects like Mecalux Retrofit (2015), Living Rooms at the Border (2019), and The Political Equator (2020). These initiatives transform borders into spaces for collaboration, mutual support, and inclusion, redefining them as sites for shared public life and affordable housing solutions.⁸ By addressing the socioeconomic inequities faced by border communities, their work demonstrates how architecture can serve as both a functional tool and a medium for social cohesion, fostering unity and equity in contested spaces. Their interdisciplinary methods showcase how built environments can meet tangible needs while simultaneously cultivating shared identities and transforming divisive boundaries into spaces for collective action.

6 Rael and San Fratello, *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*; Paloma Checa-Gismero, 'Sovereignty Claims over the Borderlands', in *Biennial Boom: Making Contemporary Art Global* (Duke University Press, 2024); Marcos Ramírez Erre, 'Toy An-Horse', <http://marcoserre.com/toy-an-horse/>, 1997.

7 Melanie Dodd, *Spatial Practices: Modes of Action and Engagement with the City*, *Spatial Practices: Modes of Action and Engagement with the City*, 2019; Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, 'Nation Against Nature: From the Global Border to the Cross-Border Commons', *Architectural Design* 90, no. 1 (2020).

8 Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, 'At the Border: Unwalling Citizenship', <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/at-the-border/358908/unwalling-citizenship/>, 2020.

The common thread across these projects is their use of art, architecture, and creative interventions to engage with the complexities of contested spaces. By offering alternative ways of seeing and experiencing borders, these practices challenge rigid definitions of division, fostering dialogue, empathy, and understanding. While some, like Cruz and Forman's architectural approaches, provide physical solutions for community interaction, others, such as Aliÿs's *the Green Line* or JR's border installations, focus on symbolic representations to provoke reflection and spark critical engagement. Collectively, these artists and architects are less concerned with "solving" border issues and more interested in reimagining these spaces as platforms for alternative perspectives and dialogue.

This research sits in the wider context of the projects, highlighting the capacity of such practices to create "alternative spaces", transcending disciplinary as well as physical borders. The process of assembling fragments - whether architectural, symbolic, or material - creates opportunities for personal and collective connection to contested spaces. Such projects can be viewed as echoing or extending collage practices in different media. This research thus highlights how collage practices and allied creative practices can refract their environments through new lenses, becoming arenas of possibility and dialogue. Reflecting more closely on collage methodology helps elaborate on its implementation, demonstrating further the insights gained throughout the research process.

Epilogue collage-making

As discussed in this thesis, collage-making does not adhere to a fixed methodology or prescribed set of rules. Its subject matter can encompass any topic, with fragments retaining their original meanings or taking on entirely new interpretations. This inherent flexibility makes collage production challenging to categorise or narrate linearly. The process - beginning with the urge to create, progressing through material collection, and culminating in the manipulation and arrangement of fragments - is profoundly shaped by the personal instincts and reflections of the collagist. Each decision, whether driven by preference, curiosity, or awareness, forges meaningful relationships between fragments, shaping the evolving composition.

This section seeks to provide a transparent account of my methodology through collage-making. I delineate its stages, including material collection, manipulation, composition, and finalisation. Although finalisation is not necessarily an endpoint, these stages represent pivotal moments of interaction between the collagist and the medium. The collagist acts as both initiator and interpreter, navigating evolving thoughts and emotions to weave them into the composition, imbuing it with meaning.

Unlike earlier phases of my research, where uncertainty often dictated my decisions, the making of a final collage for this epilogue reflects my gradually increasing confidence and trust in the iterative nature of the practice. Such confidence, however, does not diminish the experimental spirit of collage-making. On the contrary, it allows

the process to unfold, guided by unexpected connections and discoveries. While my initial intention was to create a collage specifically for this epilogue, the process evolved independently, shaping a composition unique to this final reflection.

Material collection and categorisation

Material collection is a foundational element of collage-making, shaping both creative exploration and thematic representation. As highlighted earlier in my thesis, the absence of rigid rules in collage fosters spontaneity and interdisciplinarity, making it adaptable and inclusive. Earlier in my research, material collection was significantly influenced by the logistical constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital resources became the main tool for gathering visual content, enabling access to archives, photographs, and maps when physical exploration was restricted. However, the actual construction of collages has remained strictly analogue. This decision tends to be guided by my preference for the tactile and serendipitous nature of working with physical fragments. Analogue collage allows for unanticipated interactions: the texture of paper, accidental tears, or unexpected variations introduced by printing processes enrich the work with unique layers of meaning. These physical qualities, often absent in digital methods, amplify the fragments' ability to resonate with the themes explored in the research.⁹

For my epilogue collage, while no longer constrained by pandemic-related restrictions, I faced new limitations in a different setting with restricted access to printers, dedicated workspace, and digital archives. Rather than viewing these limitations as obstacles, I embrace them as opportunities to reaffirm the adaptability of collage. Restricting myself to fragments and images stored in a single box from earlier projects, I challenged myself to create using only these limited resources. This reaffirmed one key insight from earlier in the thesis: collage, as a method and medium, transcends resource limitations and thrives in scarcity.

Unlike previous processes, this final collage-making effort began with a deliberate act of categorisation. Spreading the fragments across my workspace, I was reminded of Italo Calvino's *American Lessons*, where he described organising visual elements into thematic categories before creating his fictional cities.¹⁰ Inspired by his way of thinking, I sought to categorise the fragments as components of an "imaginary Nicosia." This process went beyond practical organisation; it became a reflective exercise connecting me emotionally and intellectually to the materials. Fragments were grouped into thematic categories - people, structures, colours, maps, texts, and earlier collages - each evoking distinct memories and associations.

9 During this research process, I also tried making digital collages. However, the limited movement capacity that occurred due to my limited ability to use the programs did not provide satisfaction with the production process and the collages I produced. After making a few analogue and digital collages simultaneously, I decided that making analogue collages was more efficient for me in terms of understanding and perceiving the process.

10 Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988); Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (London: Vintage, 1997).

My interaction with fragments transcended their static roles, transforming them into active participants in intellectual and creative processes. As I handled each fragment, observing its textures and contemplating its placement, a dialogical exchange emerged in my mind between Nicosia's contested past and its speculative future. These fragments, imbued with layers of historical memory and personal significance, enabled reflections that were both analytical and emotive. The revisiting of these elements reinforced collage's temporality: fragments collected in the past reactivated in the present serving as catalysts for envisioning alternative futures for the city. This dynamic interplay between past, present, and future shaped the final composition and highlighted collage's broader capacity as a method for navigating complex spatial, cultural, and social narratives.

My categorisation underscored the fragments' dual roles as physical and conceptual objects. Handling each fragment - examining its textures, colours, and imperfections - initiated a dialogue that informed its placement within the composition. Categorising also suggested moments of serendipity, where fragments revealed unexpected connections. Some fragments seemed to "call out," resonating with personal or thematic associations. Torn edges or visible imperfections evoked the fractured urban fabric of Nicosia, while pieces from Venetian walls, with their arrow-like shapes, grew to metaphorically and visually guided the composition. An image of weeping women seemed to evoke the city's contested history, while a fragment of a tree-lined border appeared to suggest a sense of guarded hope. This fortuitously emerging juxtaposition reflected the complexity of Nicosia's identity, challenging me to integrate them into a coherent narrative, directing my gaze and weaving together the layered histories of the city into new imaginative narratives.

While the material collection, the categorisation of fragments, served as an initial step engaging with the images, fragments, and sources went beyond simple observation. It involved touching, examining, and intuitively assigning meaning to each piece. This tactile and cognitive interaction forms a preparatory phase where fragments are internalised and contextualised in my mind. Even before assembling them physically, familiarising myself with these elements, forged connections by imagining their possible roles within potential compositions. In this way, categorisation built a visual and conceptual vocabulary. This was not only a mental rehearsal of prospective collages but also ensured that the fragments could be imbued with significance, reinterpreted by weaving them into a cohesive composition. I could then go on to the active construction of the collage, where the fragments could come to life.

Manipulation and bringing together

The assembly of fragments into a cohesive collage is inherently reflective and iterative, intertwining intuitive decision-making with deliberate interaction. After categorising and familiarising myself again with fragments previously collected over years of research, I approached this final composition with both uncertainty and intent. My earlier experiences provided a foundation, yet this phase remained unpredictable,

shaped by the ever-evolving dialogue between materials and my reflections. Handling each fragment - observing its textures, contemplating its histories, and repeatedly repositioning it - became an exploration of both material and memory. The act of arranging was less about adhering to a predetermined vision and more about allowing connections and narratives to emerge organically through interaction.

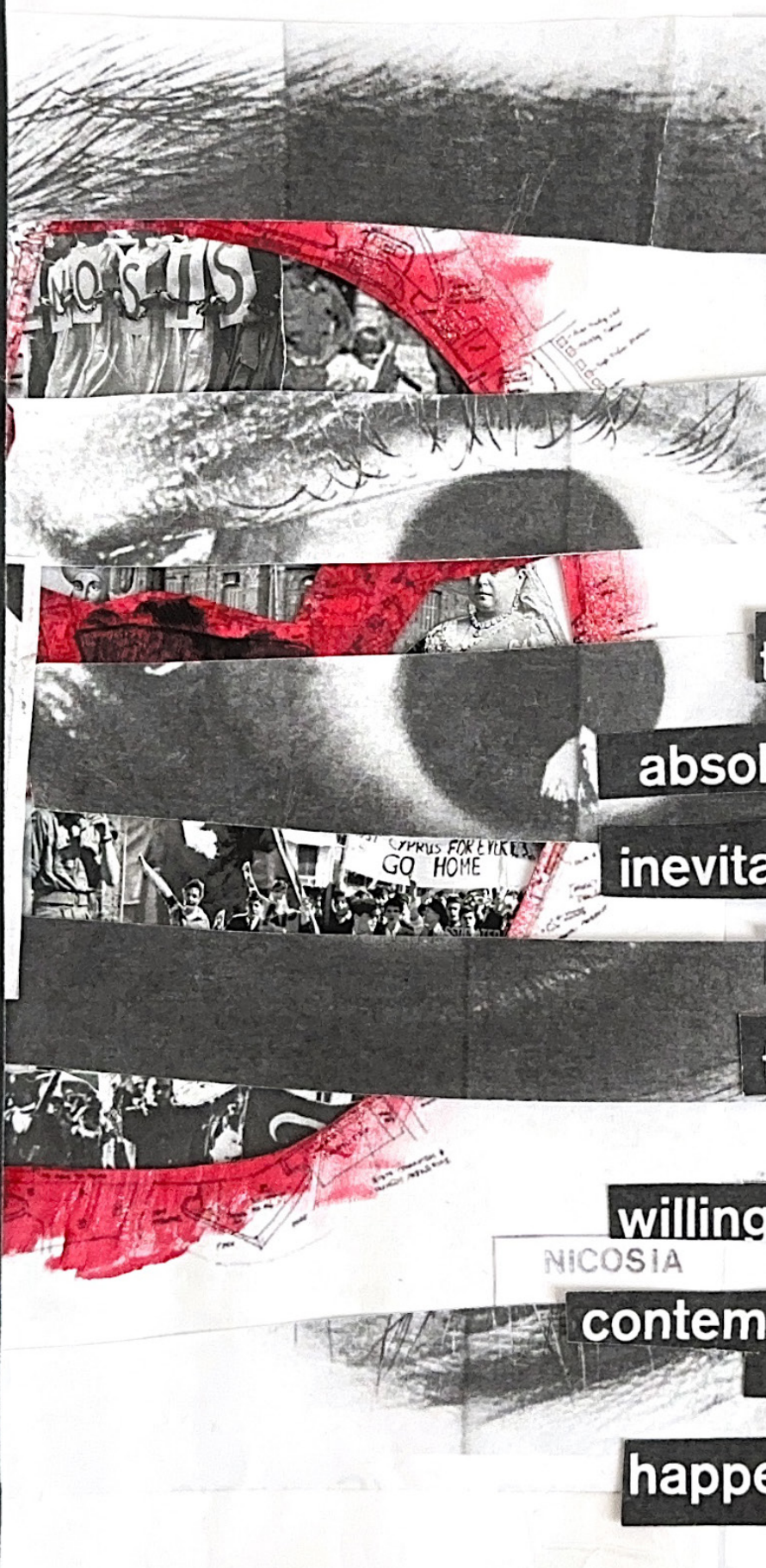
The aesthetic judgements of collage-making intertwine form, colour, and composition with the thematic concerns of contested spaces. In this composition, two key fragments initiated the process: the Venetian map outlined in bold red and a fragmented eye image. The map, presented earlier in this thesis under the title *The Boundaries*, traces Nicosia's ancient Venetian walls. Its striking red outline caught my attention and created a dramatic focal point in my mind, symbolising both continuity and division. The fragmented eye, on the other hand, was an image from Marshall McLuhan's *The Medium is the Massage*.¹¹ Initially cut during an earlier collage session, these fragments retained an unsettling intensity. This black and white fragmented eye image formed a mental image of Nicosia, reminding me of its border line and the security cameras around it. When layered with the map, the eye appeared to fix its gaze on the outlined boundaries, creating a dynamic interplay of observation, surveillance, and constraint. This pairing deepened the narrative tension, suggesting both a fractured perspective and an amplified focus on the division and its contested history.

Despite the initial impact of these juxtapositions, the composition prompted deeper introspection. The unresolved tension within the collage led me to incorporate fragments from earlier works, bridging past explorations with present reflections. A cropped photo ID of a child, one I retained but never used in previous collages, emerged as a central element. This fragment, with its absent facial features, evoked themes of displacement and loss, resonating with Nicosia's contested identity. Placed at the intersection of the city's main urban axes, I wanted to symbolise the fragmented lives affected by division and the potential for reconnection. To emphasise this connection, I introduced a narrow black strip as a visual pathway linking the child fragment to the city's central corridor, further reinforcing the dialogue between individual experience and collective memory.

The inclusion of textual fragments played a crucial role in shaping a narrative. A line from McLuhan's book stating, "*There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening*",¹² provided a reflective anchor for the composition. With this text I tried to encapsulate a hopeful perspective, engaging with contested spaces not as static or irreparable but as sites of potential transformation. Paired with the fragmented eye and the red-outlined map, this textual element offered a counterpoint to the tension, suggesting a path toward understanding and possibility.

11 Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (Corte Madera, California: Gingko Press nc, 1967).

12 McLuhan and Fiore, 17.



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Although the initial composition evoked for me strong visual and emotional reactions, it also left me with a lingering sense of dissatisfaction. The interplay of muted grey tones against striking reds and intricate details created a provocative yet aggressive aesthetic that I appreciated. However, I felt it did not yet properly encapsulate lessons learned from my research or serve as a good synthesis of Nicosia's contested spaces. After stepping away for reflection, I revisited previous collages, seeking elements that could add depth to the work. I decided that incorporating an additional layer of fragments and narratives would allow the collage to better reflect the multifaceted themes of this research.

I began this next phase by revisiting a drawing from *the Buffer Zone* collage, originally presented in Chapter 6. This drawing has always held personal significance for me, representing both the physical and imagined potentials of the buffer zone, a space heavily restricted for me due to my Turkish background. Despite these constraints, the drawing enabled me to visualise and work within this restricted area. The imagined structures depicted in the drawing, designed to prevent buildings from collapsing, became a source of inspiration. Carefully cutting into these structure drawings, I created irregular gaps - thin, unpredictable openings that expanded and contracted across the image. These gaps reminded me of a moment during a visit to Nicosia when I peered through a small opening in the border wall, attempting to comprehend the unaltered, untouched landscape of the buffer zone. This act of looking into the restricted area, while dramatic, also sparked thoughts about the layered histories concealed within this space. The gaps within the collage mirrored this experience, inviting me to reflect on Nicosia's past and its implications for the future.

These newly created gaps became spaces for revisiting fragments from earlier chapters, providing an opportunity to weave the research's overarching narratives into the composition. The gaps served as metaphorical entry points into the city's history, allowing me to embed fragments that recalled specific events and thematic explorations. For example, I placed fragments from the *Sultan and Queen Together* collage, allowing the Sultan's moustache and the Queen's gaze to subtly emerge through one of the openings, imbuing the piece with what I hope is a sense of playful irony. Under this, I layered *Grivas' Enosis*, where faint silhouettes of historical figures like Hitler and Grivas added depth and tension. Additional fragments from *Enosis*, *Bloody Christmas*, *Republics are Born*, and Chapter 4's *The Walls of Nicosia*, *The Language of the Buffer Zone*, *In-Between the No-Man's Zone*, and *Olympus Hotel* were integrated into the remaining crevices. Together, these fragments created a visually and thematically rich interplay, hinting at the complex narratives of contested spaces while inviting closer engagement from viewers.

To guide the composition further, I revisited the reference lines introduced in Chapter 6. These lines, initially compositional guides, took on a fresh conceptual significance in this collage. I realised they could symbolise my intellectual journey through the research. Each line marked a potential trajectory of thought, encouraging viewers to

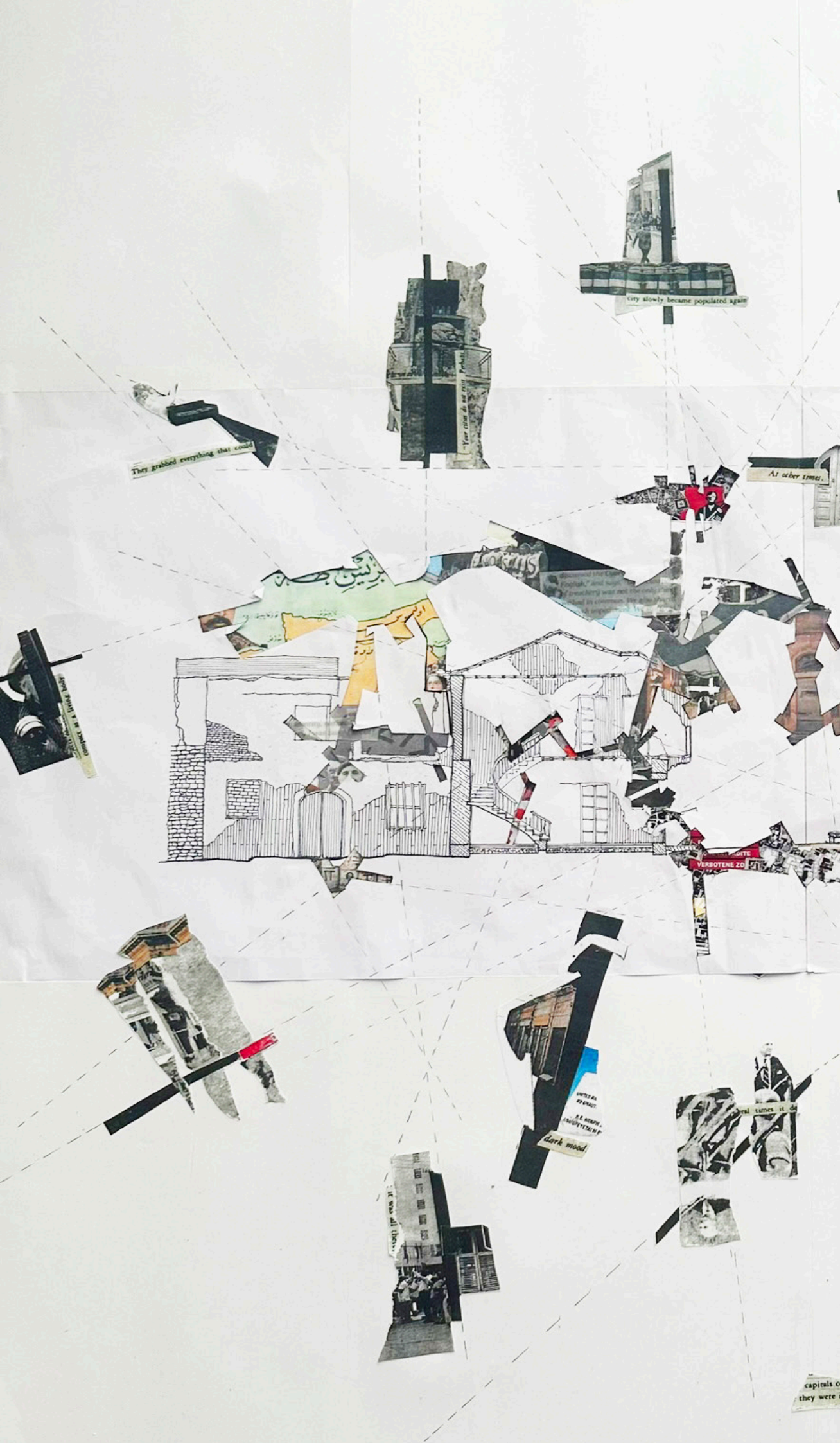
trace connections across the fragments. I incorporated open-ended collages from the Conclusion section, previously presented as representations of the infinite potential of collage. These fragments, which had lingered somewhat unresolved in my earlier works, found new meaning within this final piece. I realised that, by aligning them with the reference lines, I was able to create intersections that bridged separate collages, forming a unified yet dialogical narrative.

This approach also paid homage to Melita Couta's *Urban Legend I*, where independent collages collectively narrate a city's story. Similarly, the fragments in this collage became interwoven components of a broader dialogue, each contributing to a layered narrative within Nicosia's contested middle ground. As I traced the connections between the fragments, I discovered smaller collages embedded within the larger composition, offering distinct perspectives on the city's complexities. These smaller narratives, much like Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, particularly the stories of Clarice, revealed how individual tales, when combined, can create a multifaceted portrayal of a city.¹³ The interplay of these fragments mirrored the city itself - distinct yet interconnected - reflecting Nicosia's layered histories and potential futures. By aligning these fragments with guiding reference lines, the collage mimicked a map of thought, inviting viewers to navigate its intricate paths. The integration of earlier works and open-ended fragments underscored collage's iterative, reflective nature, encapsulating both the evolving narratives of contested spaces and the city's enduring complexities. This composition became more than a visual representation; it served as a metaphorical framework for understanding Nicosia, where each fragment contributed to the collective reinterpretation of the city's divided landscape, encouraging active engagement and reflection.

Finalising the creative process

Upon completing two distinct collages, I was able to step back and think about their divergent qualities and the unique roles they played in shaping this epilogue. The first collage, with its bold use of fragmented forms and tonal contrasts, elicited a provocative, activist-like feeling. Its aesthetic qualities - the sharp interplay of grayscale tones with striking reds - carried a directness that reminded me of the clarity and urgency found in Soviet-era propaganda collages. This felt aligned with my initial drive to create something reflective of Nicosia's contested dynamics. Then, the second collage served as a personal exploration of my journey as a researcher. By beginning with my own drawing of the buffer zone, this collage captured a deeply introspective narrative. The imagined traces from that drawing were physically cut to create serendipitous voids, which I then filled with fragments from collages developed earlier in the thesis. These fragments not only gestured toward the layered history of Nicosia but also embedded moments of irony within the composition, adding depth and complexity. The interplay of these smaller collages within the second collage narrated the city's contested history while weaving together my research reflections and speculative visions of Nicosia.

13 Calvino, *Invisible Cities*.



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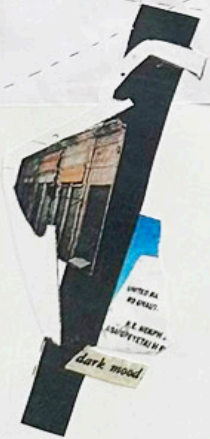
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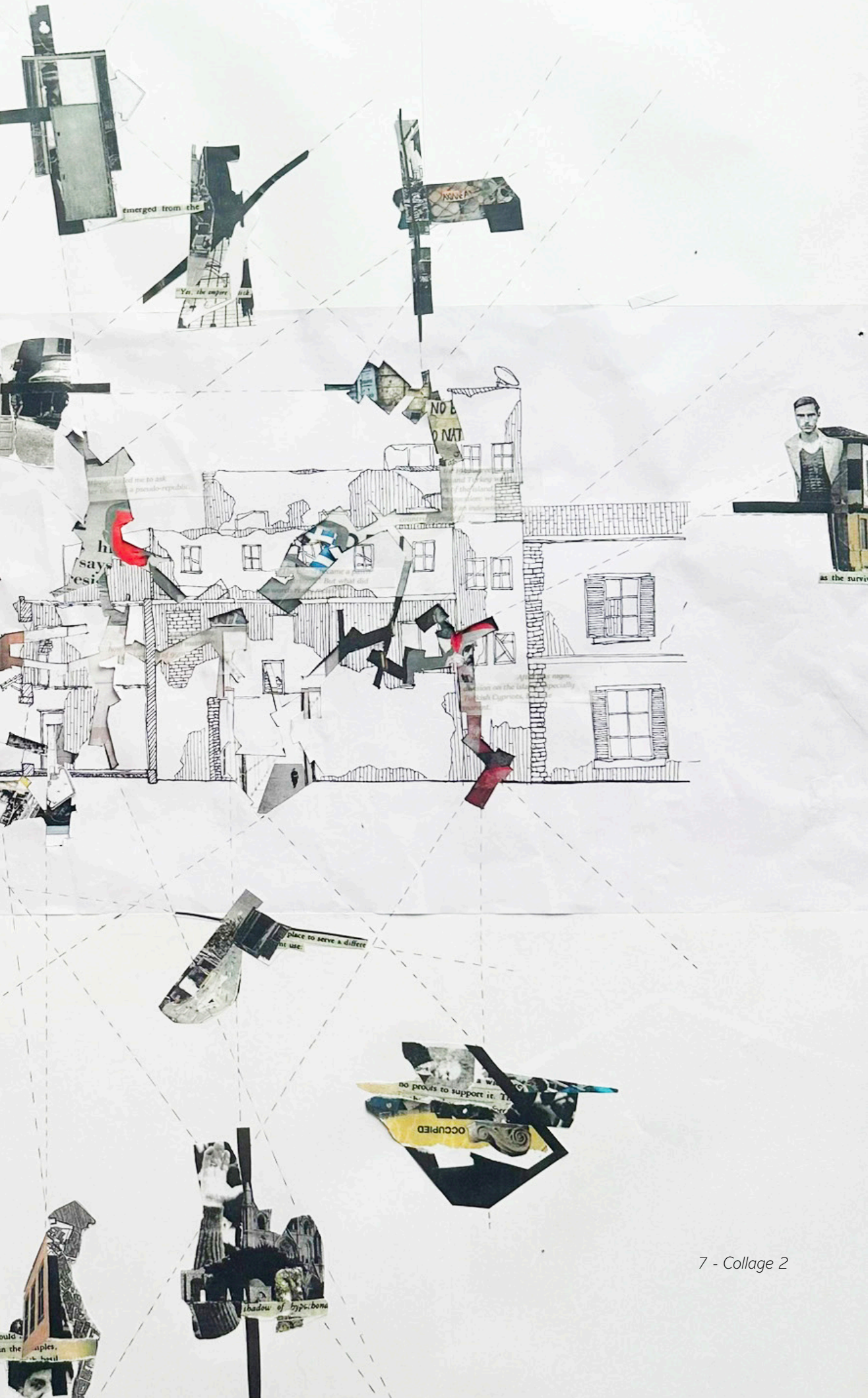
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7 - Collage 2

As I viewed the two collages side by side, I recognised that neither could encapsulate my aims of for this epilogue independently. The first lacked the reflective depth and methodological integration of the research, while the second, though rich in narrative and structure, lacked the visual immediacy of the first. The decision to merge them emerged intuitively rather than strategically. Returning to the first collage, I carefully took apart its layers again, allowing fragments to overlap and interact with the second composition. I realised that this act of dismantling and recomposing echoed the fragmented nature of Nicosia itself, where boundaries and identities continuously shift and overlap.

The juxtaposition of the red contours and fragmented eye from the first collage with the structured elements of the buffer zone drawing created a layered focal point, embodying the intertwined and contested narratives of Nicosia. I could see that these elements resonated with my personal observations of the militarised red warning signs and surveillance cameras that dominate the city's borders - symbols of control and restriction that felt both unsettling and deeply familiar. The bold red outlines hinted at ruptures and divisions, while the fragmented eye introduced a fractured perspective, embodying an effort to perceive and interpret amidst the constraints. This interplay mirrored my reflective engagement with Nicosia, revealing it as a dynamic space where tension and connection coexist.

Through these further acts of combination and juxtaposition, my final collage became a layered intricate work which, for me, combined aesthetic allure with substantive depth. It invites multiple levels of engagement: those familiar with earlier sections of the thesis may recognise fragments and themes, while those encountering it for the first time can explore its details, forming personal interpretations. The smaller, floating collages scattered across the composition resemble fragmented narratives, inviting curiosity and active questioning. Together, they evoke Nicosia's turbulent history while framing it as a site of ongoing inquiry and imagination. Beyond its visual impact, this collage serves as a synthesis of my research journey, encapsulating its lessons while leaving room for further exploration and dialogue.

Although the aesthetic value of the collage is open to the reader's interpretation, I would argue that it has pedagogical richness which lies in the process and insights it embodies. While declaring a collage "complete" is inherently challenging, this work has offered me a sense of satisfaction that is difficult to articulate. It has become a conclusion that feels both personally reflective and fulfilling. Over time, fragments may detach, or I may add new ones. Yet, as I observe the collage now, I feel satisfied that the thoughts and imaginings it provokes align with my intentions. I feel ready to stop working on it – at least for a while. It is important to recognise when a sense of contentment and accomplishment emerges in collage-making, as though the collage itself give me permission to stop. Marking what feels like the first of many possible conclusions for this collage, its future evolution nevertheless remains uncertain but, for the purpose of this epilogue, this represents its present finalised form.

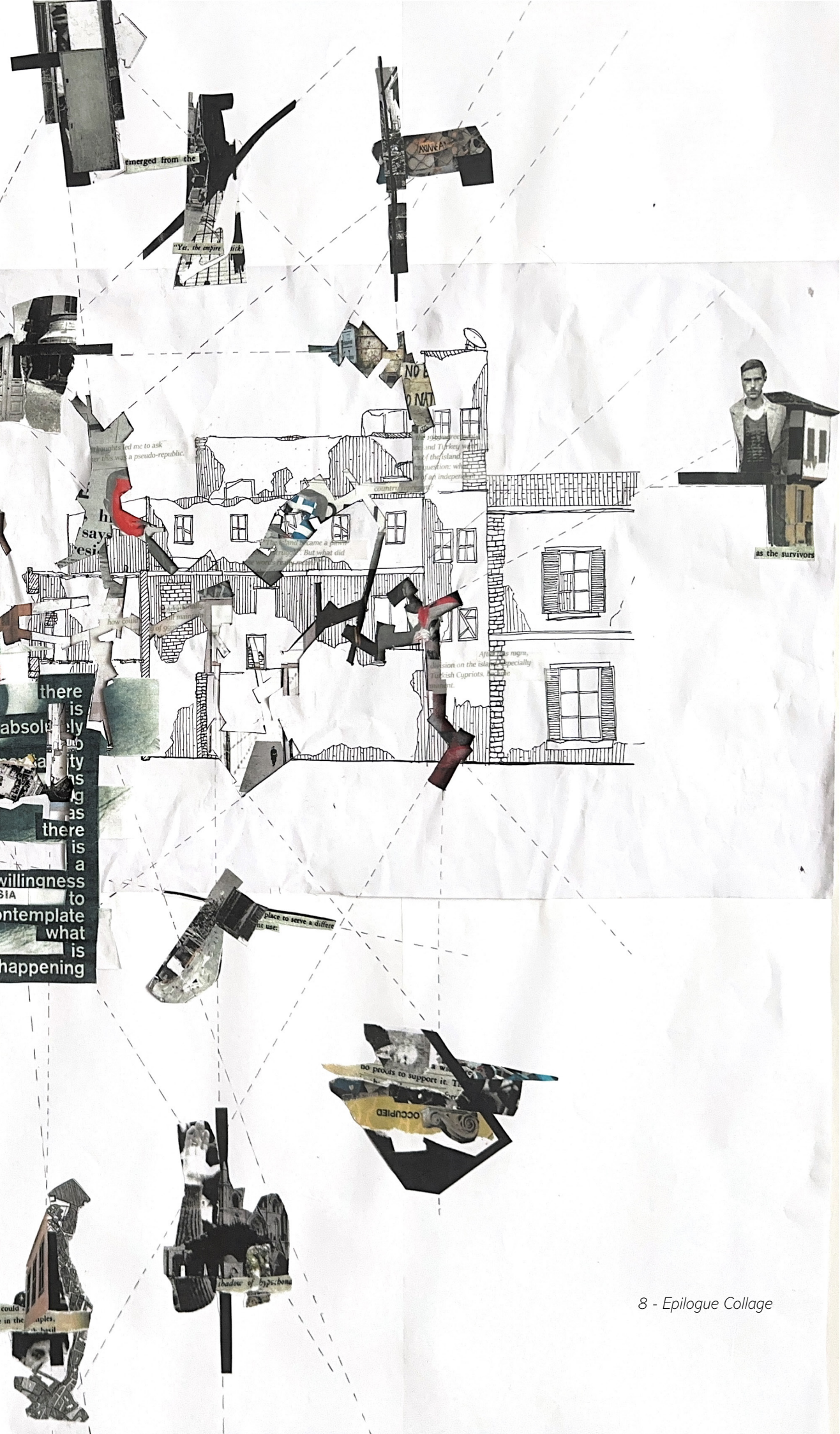
Insights from the Collage Process

This epilogue collage has yielded a reflective space to revisit and articulate my learnings with greater clarity. Collage-making, as explored in this research, is not a purely visual practice but emerges as a dynamic, iterative, and instructive process bridging creation and critical reflection. By its nature, collage accumulates meaning through layering. Each interaction with the composition offers new perspectives and connections. Particularly in contested contexts like Nicosia, fragments acquire heightened significance, embodying both the city's collective narratives and deeply personal associations. I will reflect here on the methodological adaptability and interpretative depth of collage as a research method in the context of contested spaces.

Collage offers free space. Collage, as demonstrated throughout this research and reaffirmed in the final collage, proves its ability to transcend limitations. It enabled me to navigate significant challenges, from the logistical constraints of COVID-19 to the complexities of working as a Turkish researcher within Nicosia's contested spaces. These constraints, rather than hindering progress, became opportunities for deeper engagement, compelling me to revisit earlier fragments and reimagine their roles in the final composition. This underscored how the absence of rigid methodologies in collage-making fosters freedom and adaptability, allowing for the construction of new narratives even under restrictive conditions. Far from being a hindrance, such challenges act as catalysts for innovation, enriching the creative process and highlighting collage's potential as a resilient research method. By transforming external constraints into generative forces, the process reinforced the transformative capacity of collage to foster insight and dialogue in politically charged and constrained environments. Like the projects mentioned above, this adaptability positions collage as a method particularly suited to addressing contested spaces, enabling it to bridge spatial, cultural, and social complexities.

Collage provides a shared language that transcends both the visible and invisible barriers within contested spaces. In cities like Nicosia, where divisions stem not only from physical boundaries but also from deep cultural, linguistic, and symbolic differences, collage-making reflects this complexity. As a Turkish-speaking individual, I relate to the Turkish-speaking Cypriot community yet remain separated - both symbolically and physically - from the other side of the city. These invisible borders underscore the entrenched divisions that extend far beyond the visible demarcations. Despite this, I intentionally incorporated Greek Cypriot script into the collage, acknowledging the cultural and linguistic identity of the Greek Cypriot community, while Arabic characters alluded to the city's multifaceted historical past. Alongside these, multilingual signs, and culturally significant symbols highlighted Nicosia's multilingual and multicultural makeup, encouraging reflection on identity, division, and coexistence without dictating their meanings.





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In the final collage, these elements bridged my personal experiences with collective narratives of Nicosia, fostering a deeper sense of empathy. The Arabic characters glimpsed through cut-out spaces made me reflect on the history of the Ottoman Empire and its relation to the island, while the playful gaze of the Queen fragment reminded me of my history classes. On the other hand, the incomprehensible (to me) Greek text piqued my curiosity about the other half of the island, and the Turkish phrases that I could understand but others might not make me curious about how non-Turkish speakers might interpret them. Each of these fragments added depth to the composition. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these elements created an open space for thought and connection, inviting further engagement with Nicosia's contested urban landscape and its inhabitants. By weaving together these diverse voices, the collage not only invited individual reflection but also opened a broader dialogue in a common visual language, highlighting the city's diversity while challenging its divisions.

Collage is about creating stories. The practice of collage-making facilitates what might be called a rhizomatic approach, where fragments connect spontaneously to form a web of complex associations. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of rhizomatic structures,¹⁴ this method mirrors Nicosia's fragmented reality, where multiple narratives and histories intersect without a fixed or linear trajectory. By embracing the non-hierarchical and interwoven connections of fragments, the collage echoes the city's contested spaces, resisting singular interpretations or rigid boundaries. This openness enables me - and potentially the viewer - to explore diverse perspectives, revealing layers of meaning within the composition. For example, my experience with the collage led my attention to the fragmented photo of a child. Its striking nature drew me in, compelling an emotional engagement with its symbolism. The black strip extending from the image guided my gaze to another collage embedded within the larger composition. There, a fragment of text read, "*The city slowly became populated again*". This seemingly small detail provoked a moment of profound reflection, encouraging me to envision a more hopeful perspective on Nicosia's divided narrative. Yet, I acknowledge that my experience is inherently personal; others might follow entirely different paths through the collage, guided by their own narratives and associations. This variability underscores the dialogical nature of collage-making, where meaning emerges through a fluid interplay between the material, the maker, and those engaging with it.

The act of collage-making, extending beyond the simple arrangement of fragments, emerges as a powerful method that fosters a reflective dialogue between the researcher, the materials, and the context. Each fragment - whether a map, a photograph, or a textual remnant - became an active participant, engaging with Nicosia's broader narratives and reflecting the layered complexities of its contested spaces. In the final collage, earlier fragments from previous works were reintegrated through incidental gaps, creating new meanings while simultaneously reinforcing past narratives. For

14 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004).

example, a perspective drawing from the *Olympus Hotel* collage featured a soldier walking, which unexpectedly emerged in a narrow space between two fragments - the fragmented eye, symbolising surveillance, and a text excerpt from McLuhan. This ironic juxtaposition deepened the dialogue between the pieces, as the fragmented eye pointed towards the soldier, symbolizing control, and the text acted as a hope to the divided city.

On the other hand, the tactile engagement with the materials - their textures, imperfections, and histories - also allows for discovering new connections that guided the evolving composition. The inclusion of torn edges or worn textures might symbolise the ruptures in the city's social and urban fabric, while their juxtaposition with smoother, more structured elements created a dialogue between order and disorder. For example, the use of red tones further intensified the tension, invoking the chaos and unease associated with contested spaces. Similarly, the fragmented eye symbolised surveillance, mirroring the constant monitoring that characterises Nicosia's division, and the photo of the unfaced kid reminded the lost. The interplay between these elements formed a visual metaphor for Nicosia's ongoing struggle, capturing both its physical and psychological divides.

Collage questions positionality. It echoes Paul Ricoeur's question, "From where do you speak?"¹⁵ While this question initially appears to address one's identity, it delves deeper into the socio-cultural and historical context that shape that identity.¹⁶ Throughout this research, I found myself positioned at the intersections of being architectural researcher with Turkish identity, British academic culture, and Nicosia's divided landscape - a convergence that profoundly influenced both my research and creative practice. The act of making collage mirrored my evolving understanding of Nicosia, as my perspectives on the city's fragmented reality shifted, and my choices in the collage-making process adapted accordingly. For example, while I initially worked with architecturally familiar fragments such as the map and axes, I later included a photograph of a child, reflecting my growing awareness of innocence and vulnerability amidst division, which also symbolised my hopes. At the same time, my identity - extending beyond my thoughts to my character - remains visible throughout the work. For instance, moments of frustration are marked using intense reds, as in the Bloody Christmas collage, while fragments like the divisive map emphasise separation. These choices, whether conscious or subconscious, not only reveal my emotional responses but also underscore my deeply personal engagement with the themes of division and connection. Through these layers, the collages serve as a visual dialogue between my inner reflections and the contested realities of Nicosia.

The collage-making process, much like my research, developed as a dialogical practice

15 Louise du Toit, 'Introduction: Paul Ricoeur's Question', *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 52, no. 3 (2019): 227–31; Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

16 Clive Knights, 'Fragmentary Gestures Towards the Invisible: Collage as Diviner of Collective Experience', n.d.

that constantly reflected the fluidity of my identity. The more I interacted with the materials, the more they interacted with me, guiding my thought process, and leading me to engage more deeply with Nicosia's contested space. Inspired by Foucault's view of identity as fluid and ever-changing, I began to recognise how the materials themselves became active participants in this exploration.¹⁷ As I added, removed, and rearranged the fragments, each fragment interacted with others, generating new meanings much like the shifting layers of Nicosia, as it can be seen in the iterative making process of epilogue collage. It started with two fragments representing my first thoughts, changed direction with my intensifying ideas, and turned into something completely new but related, something I never expected but dreamed of overtime for imagined Nicosia. This continuous process of questioning and discovery mirrored the dynamic nature of my identity, revealing the interwoven relationship between personal experience, social context, and research.

This dialogical space in the collage, far from being a static outcome, proved to be a dynamic and iterative phenomenon. Each decision - whether to include or exclude a fragment - was influenced by a negotiation between the material and my evolving perspective. For instance, the fragmented eye introduced themes of surveillance, prompting me to reconsider the visual and thematic relationships within the composition. The eye, with its unsettling intensity, heightened the sense of control and observation, mirroring the security measures and surveillance that define Nicosia's borders. This back-and-forth between material and researcher highlighted how collage-making is not merely about assembly but also reflection, with each fragment shaping and reshaping meaning in the context of the research. In this way, collage serves as a medium for active engagement, inviting reinterpretations and fostering a nuanced understanding of contested spaces. By presenting an open-ended narrative, the collage resists closure, reflecting the multiplicity and fluidity of borders, and allowing both the researcher and the viewer to explore new connections through ongoing reflection.

Conclusion

This epilogue emerged as a distilled reflection of the thesis, remembering a wider context of creative practice in contested settings, and encapsulating core ideas while connecting the methodological nature of collage with contemporary creative practices. Initially, the process of collage-making arose as a pragmatic response to the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and political constraints, allowing me to navigate a context I could not physically access. But, as the research evolved, collage revealed itself as more than a method; it became a creative process that structured my thoughts, intuitions, and speculative relationship with space.

By deconstructing the research into fragments and reassembling them, it enabled the emergence of new questions and insights. This adaptive methodology proved invaluable in addressing the logistical, cultural, and political challenges of working

17 Michel Foucault, *Michel Foucault: Fearless Speech, Semiotext(e)*, 2001; Michel Foucault, 'Afterword: The Subject and Power', in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 1982.

within Nicosia's divided environment. Transforming restrictions into opportunities, collage demonstrated its potential as a dynamic, dialogical, and interdisciplinary medium that transcends traditional research boundaries. Its open-ended and serendipitous nature fostered a flexible approach to exploring contested spaces shaped by complex socio-political and geographical dynamics.

Collage became more than just a research tool in my personal journey; it evolved into a means of overcoming individual constraints and expanding possibilities. Beginning with a medium I was neither formally trained in nor extensively practiced, collage offered a way to navigate my limitations - linguistic barriers, restricted access, and political divisions. It taught me to embrace uncertainty, adapt to evolving contexts, and allow the process itself to guide discovery. Collage structured my thoughts, intuitions, and speculative relationship with space, reflecting the contested nature of the spaces I studied and echoing memories and connections inherent in Nicosia's divided landscape.

While this research is rooted in architectural inquiry due to my professional background, it underscores the interdisciplinary potential of collage as a medium. Its relational and open-ended nature bridges personal and collective narratives, highlighting the interconnectedness of history, politics, culture, the city, and individual experiences. This makes collage not only relevant to architectural studies but also applicable to disciplines such as history, sociology, and cultural studies, particularly in contested spaces where traditional methodologies often fall short. In these spaces, where differences are suppressed to promote homogeneity, the contradictory nature of collage becomes particularly significant. Its fragmented yet cohesive structure mirrors the layered complexities of contested environments, offering a unique lens to address their socio-political and cultural dynamics beyond disciplinary silos.

Collage's relational and dialogical structure further proves invaluable in bridging personal and collective narratives. By integrating fragments of history, culture, and personal experience, this method highlights how individual perspectives can intersect with broader socio-political and cultural frameworks. This interplay found resonance in the works of artists like Francis Alÿs, JR, Rael and San Fratello, and Marcos Ramírez Erre, whose creative interventions in contested spaces emphasize dialogue, irony, and shared experiences over rigid solutions. These artists and architects demonstrated how such interventions can transform spaces often seen as insurmountable obstacles into platforms for dialogue, shared experiences, and mutual understanding. Similarly, collage operates as a participatory medium, inviting researchers, viewers, and communities to co-create meaning. By reconfiguring physical and psychological boundaries into spaces of potential, transformation, and connection, collage exemplifies the interdisciplinary potential of creative practices in addressing the complexities of contested environments.

Furthermore, my epilogue collage also exemplifies iterative, dialogical, and political implications of the method, especially in contested spaces. Each fragment, whether drawn from past works or newly introduced, contributed to a composition that prioritized process over outcome, mirroring the fragmented yet interconnected realities of Nicosia.

This act of assembling disparate elements symbolised the struggle for unity amidst chaos, reflecting the unresolved tensions inherent in contested environments. Collage resisted rigid definitions, embracing dissonance and plurality to reveal the potential for coexistence. By capturing the nuances of division and connection, it highlighted its transformative potential as a medium that fosters empathy, dialogue, and reimagination.

Through this thesis, I have argued that collage represents a methodological alternative for researching contested spaces by integrating diverse political, social, cultural, and personal perspectives. Its iterative questioning not only deepened engagement with layered histories but also underscored its role as both a research method and a reflective practice. Collage's adaptability transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, enabling researchers and practitioners to navigate fragmented environments with creativity and flexibility. By challenging rigid boundaries and prioritizing reflection over fixed solutions, collage positions contested spaces as sites of potential, transformation, and interdisciplinary inquiry. This research calls for further exploration of collage's possibilities across fields, emphasizing its capacity to integrate multiplicity and foster new ways of understanding complex environments.

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PART I

Chapter 1

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Photomontage, 38 x 27 cm.
(Online) Available at: <https://heartfield.adk.de/en/node/366> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 6 *Merzbau*, designed by Kurt Schwitters, 1933.
Installation, photographed by Wilhelm Redemann in 1933.
(Online) Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/08/kurt-schwitters-reconstructions-of-the-merzbau> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 7 *Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper*, designed by Mies van der Rohe, 1921.
Charcoal and graphite on paper mounted on board, 173.4 x 121.4 cm.
(Online) Available at: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/787> (Accessed October 2023)
- 8 *Resor House project, Jackson Hole, Wyoming*, designed by Mies van der Rohe, 1937-8.
Pencil and photocollage on illustration on board, 36.2 x 101.6 cm.
(Online) Available at: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/130218> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 9 *The Tuned Suburb*, designed by Archigram, 1968.
Photocollage.
(Online) Available at: <https://architecturewithoutarchitecture.blogspot.com/2012/12/the-tuned-in-suburb.html> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 10 *Il Monumento Continue*, designed by Superstudio, 1969.
Photocollage.
(Online) Available at: <https://artreview.com/september-2016-review-superstudio/> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 11 *Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: The Strip*, designed by Rem Koolhaas, 1972.
Cut-and-pasted paper with watercolour, ink, gouache, and colour pencil on gelatine silver photograph, 40.6 x 50.5 cm.
(Online) Available at: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/104692?artist_id=6956&page=1&sov_referrer=artist (Accessed 17 February 2024)

Chapter 2

- 1 *Destruction of Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque*, designed by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994.
Image Source: Andrew Herscher, Warchitectural Theory, Journal of Architectural Education, 2008; originally from *Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo* by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994.
(Online) Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2007.00167.x> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 2 'Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo,' cover of exhibition catalogue.
Image Source: Andrew Herscher, Warchitectural Theory, Journal of Architectural Education, 2008; originally from *Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo* by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994.
(Online) Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2007.00167.x> (Accessed 17 February 2024)

- 3 *Map of destruction in Sarajevo's Bazaar*, designed by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994.
Image Source: Andrew Herscher, *Warchitectural Theory*, Journal of Architectural Education, 2008; originally from *Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo* by Asocijacija arhitekta DAS-SABIH, 1994.
(Online) Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2007.00167.x>
(Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 4 *Sarajevo's condensed*, designed by Trio Sarajevo, 1994.
Photocollage, postcard format, 15 x 10 cm.
(Online) Available at: <http://museuminexile.com/index.php/trio> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 5 *The Wall*, designed by Trio Sarajevo, 1994.
Photocollage, postcard format, 15 x 10 cm.
(Online) Available at: <http://museuminexile.com/index.php/trio> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 6 *Wake up, Europe!*, designed by Trio Sarajevo, 1994.
Photocollage, postcard format, 15 x 10 cm.
(Online) Available at: <http://museuminexile.com/index.php/trio> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 7 *The Sarajevo Survival Guide*, designed by FAMA, 1914
Guide book format, 26 x 12 cm.
(Online) Available at: <https://www.famacollection.org/eng/> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 8 The image used in the Sarajevo Survival Guide.
Sarajevo Survival Guide, designed by FAMA.
(Online) Available at: <https://www.famacollection.org/eng/> (Accessed 17 February 2024)
- 9 The Sarajevo Project, *No. 1*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 10 The Sarajevo Project, *No.9*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 11 The Sarajevo Project, *No. 10*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 12 The Sarajevo Project, *No. 11*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 13 The Sarajevo Project, *No. 18*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 14 The Sarajevo Project, *No.20*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 15 The Sarajevo Project, *No.29*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 16 The Sarajevo Project, *No.6*, from Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 17 Collaged image from the Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 18 Collaged image from the Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.

- 19 Collaged image from the Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.
- 20 The Sarajevo Project, Radical Reconstruction, designed by Lebbeus Woods, 1993.
Image Source: Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 1997.

PART II

- 1 *Collage-making table*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023.

Chapter 3

- 1 *Sultan and Queen Together*
Scanned collage, 29.7 x 21 cm, designed by author, 2021.
- 2 *Collage-making process*
Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Sultan and Queen Together* collage, 2021.
- 3 *ENOSIS*
Scanned collage, 29.7 x 21 cm, designed by author, 2021.
- 4 *Collage-making process*
Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *ENOSIS* collage, 2021.
- 5 *Grivas' Enosis*
Scanned collage, 21 x 29.7 cm, designed by author, 2021.
- 6 *Collage-making process*
Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Grivas' Enosis* collage, 2021.
- 7 *Republics are Born*
Scanned collage, 29.7 x 21 cm, designed by author, 2021.
- 8 *Collage-making process*
Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Republics are Born* collage, 2021.
- 9 *Bloody Christmas*
Scanned collage, 21 x 29.7 cm, designed by author, 2021.
- 10 *Collage-making process*
Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Bloody Christmas* collage, 2021.
- 11 *Invasion?*
Scanned collage, 21 x 29.7 cm, designed by author, 2021.
- 12 *Collage-making process*
Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Invasion?* collage, 2021.
- 13 *Crossing Point*
Scanned collage, 29.7 x 21 cm, designed by author, 2021.

14 *Collage-making process*

Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Crossing Point* collage, 2021.

Chapter 4

1 *Calvino's Clarice or Nicosia*

Scanned collage, 40 x 20 cm, designed by author, 2023.

2 *The Walls of Nicosia*

Scanned collage, 21 x 21 cm, designed by author, 2022.

3 *Collage-making process*

Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *the Walls of Nicosia* collage, 2022.

4 *The Boundaries 1-2*

Scanned collage, 42 x 29,7 cm, designed by author, 2022.

5 *Collage-making process*

Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *the Boundaries 1-2* collage, 2022.

6 *The Language of the Buffer Zone*

Scanned collage, 23 x 23 cm, designed by author, 2022.

7 *Collage-making process*

Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *the Language of the Buffer Zone* collage, 2022.

8 *In-Between the No-man Zone*

Scanned collage, 21 x 23 cm, 2022.

9 *Collage-making process*

Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *In-Between the No-man Zone* collage, 2022.

10 *Olympus Hotel*

Scanned collage, 29.7 x 21 cm, 2022.

11 *Collage-making process*

Screenshots captured from the author's video, recorded during the collage-making process of *Olympus Hotel* collage, 2022.

Chapter 5

1 *Urban Legend I*, designed by Melita Couta, 2005.

Mixed-media collage on paper, 170 x 190 cm.

(Online) Available at: <https://www.melitacouta.com/cityscapes> (Accessed 17 February 2024)

2 *Collaging Selimiye*

Scanned collage, 20 x 23 cm, designed by author, 2023.

3 *Collaging Omeriye*

Scanned collage, 20 x 23 cm, designed by author, 2023.

4 *Collaging Arabahmet*

Scanned collage, 20 x 25 cm, designed by author, 2023.

5 *Collaging Chrysalinotissa*

Scanned collage, 20 x 24 cm, designed by author, 2023.

6 *Collaging the Buffer Zone I*
Scanned collage, 20 x 25 cm, designed by author, 2023.

7 *Collaging the Buffer Zone II*
Scanned collage, 30 x 25 cm, designed by author, 2023.

8 *Collaging Eleftheria Square*
Scanned collage, 20 x 25 cm, designed by author, 2023.

Chapter 6

1 **The Buffer Zone**
Scanned collage, 84 x 56 cm, designed by author, 2023.

2 **Collage-making process, drawing border.**
Scanned drawing, 84 x 56 cm, designed by author, 2023.

3 **Collage-making process, drawing inside border.**
Scanned drawing, 84 x 56 cm, designed by author, 2023.

4 **Details**
Details from the Buffer Zone collage.

Chapter 7

1 **Exhibition Room**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023.

2 **Exhibition Room**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023.

3 **Green Line planning of exhibition room**
Drawing, 2023.

4 **Entrance of Exhibition Room**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

5 *Nicosia Guide*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

6 **First part of exhibition space**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

7 **Hanging fragment**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

8 *Seeing through hanging fragment*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

9 **The Border**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

10 *Watching through the border*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

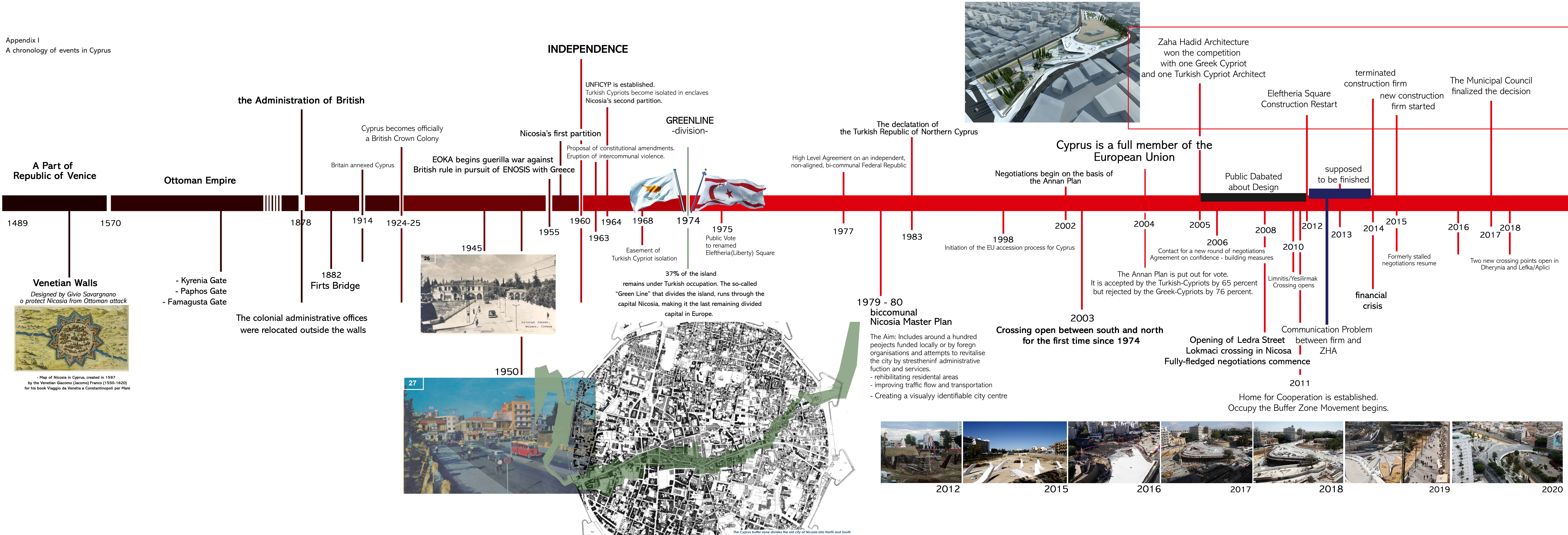
11 **Image from exhibition**
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2023

Chapter 8

- 1 *The echoes of Calvino's Clarice in Nicosia*
Collage zine, designed by author, 2023.

Epilogue

- 1 *Francis Alÿs – The Green Line, 2004, Jerusalem*
Image Source: Screenshots captured from the artist's video.
(Online) Available at: <https://francisalys.com/the-green-line/> (Accessed 11 November 2025)
- 2 *JR, Giants, Kikito and the Border Patrol, 2017, US-Mexico Border*
(Online) Available at: <https://www.jr-art.net/projects/giants-border-mexico> (Accessed 11 November 2025)
- 3 *JR, Migrants, Picnic Across the Border, 2017, US-Mexico Border*
(Online) Available at: <https://www.jr-art.net/projects/giants-border-mexico> (Accessed 11 November 2025)
- 4 *Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, Teeter-Totter Wall Installation, 2019, US-Mexico Border.*
(Online) Available at: <https://www.rael-sanfratello.com/made/teetertotter-wall> (Accessed 11 November 2025)
- 5 *Horse, Marcos Ramírez Erre, Toy-an Horse, 1997, US-Mexico Border.*
(Online) Available at: <http://marcoserre.com/toy-an-horse/> (Accessed 11 November 2025)
- 6 *Epilogue collage 1.*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2025.
- 7 *Epilogue collage 2.*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2025.
- 8 *Epilogue collage.*
Photograph: Ceren Senturk, 2025.



- Map of Nicosia in Cyprus, created in 1597 by the Venetian Giacomo (Jacomo) Franco (1550-1620) for his book Viaggio da Venetia a Constantinopoli per Mare



Appendix II

The Walls of Nicosia collage's layers and alternative combinations















Appendix III

Background Information on Nicosia Master Plan Projects

The following summary is drawn from a variety of sources including “Restoring the Heart of Nicosia” published by the United Nations Development Programme Division of Information in 1987, “Nicosia Master Plan: A Landmark for Future Cyprus” published by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in 1988, informational leaflets from the Bi-communal Development Programme, online resources from UNDP, a 2004 diagnostic report by UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services, as well as a report commissioned by Europa Nostra on the buffer zone of the historic centre of Nicosia in 2013.

Funding for these initiatives came from a range of sources, including the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), grants from the Bi-communal Development Programme (BDP) supported by USAID and the United Nations Development Programme, local contributions, and EU Structural Fund assistance. It’s important to note that EU Structural Funds are accessible only for NMP projects within the Republic of Cyprus, as the Turkish Republic of Cyprus is not a member of the European Union.

Below are brief descriptions of selected projects undertaken within the walled city of Nicosia for this research:

Selimiye Area Project

- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
- Stabilizing and restoring significant historical landmarks within the Walled City.

Omeriye Area Project

- Republic of Cyprus
- Stabilizing and restoring significant historical landmarks within the Walled City. Including restoration of Ottoman baths, and Omeriye Mosque.

Arapahmet Neighbourhood Project

- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
- Revitalization of the ancient and culturally significant residential district within the Walled City, encompassing the renovation of historical residences, establishment of community amenities, and restructuring of traffic and pedestrian routes.

Chrysaliniotissa Neighbourhood Project

- Republic of Cyprus
- Reviving one of the ancient and historic sections of the Walled City through the restoration of residences, the reimagining of a public garden, and the establishment of amenities such as a nursery, a centre for traditional handicrafts, and additional facilities.

Survey of Buildings within the Buffer Zone

- United Nations Buffer Zone
- Thorough professional survey of deteriorating structures within the United Nations Buffer

Zone.

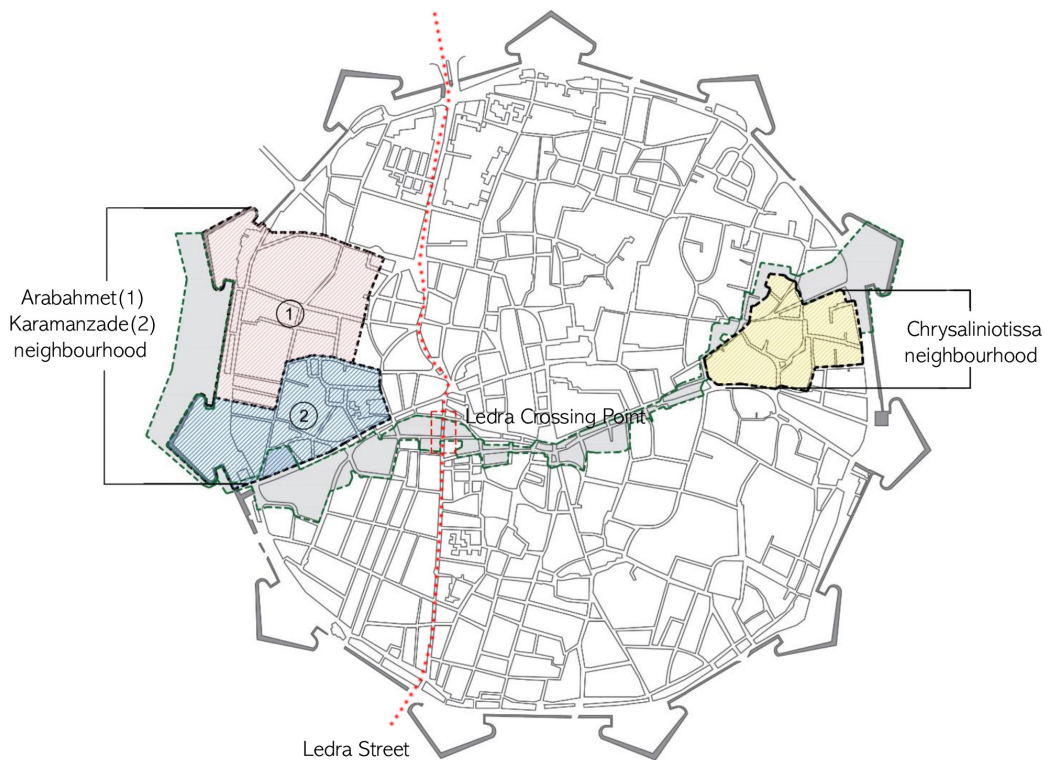
Eleftheria Square

- Republic of Cyprus
- Enlargement and enhancement of a central square to create an open plaza, along with the transformation of a portion of the moat into a spacious urban park.

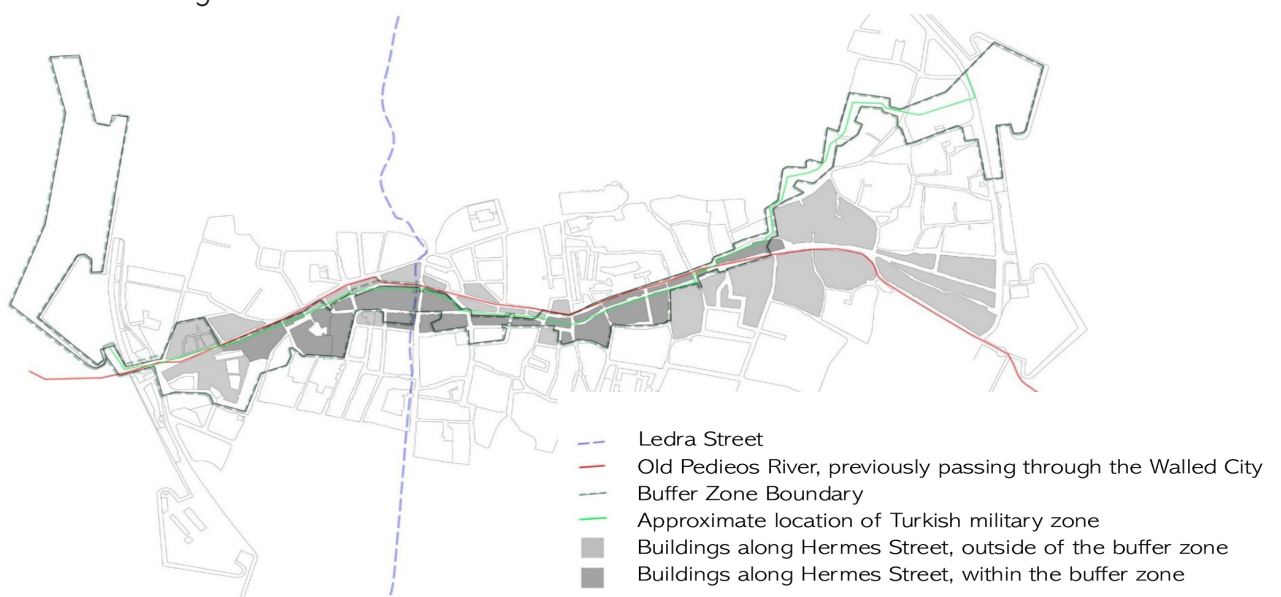
City Walls, Bastions, and Moat

- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Republic of Cyprus, United Nations Buffer Zone
- Renovation of the 16th-century Venetian-era walls and bastions encircling Nicosia, along with landscaping of the bastion and moat regions

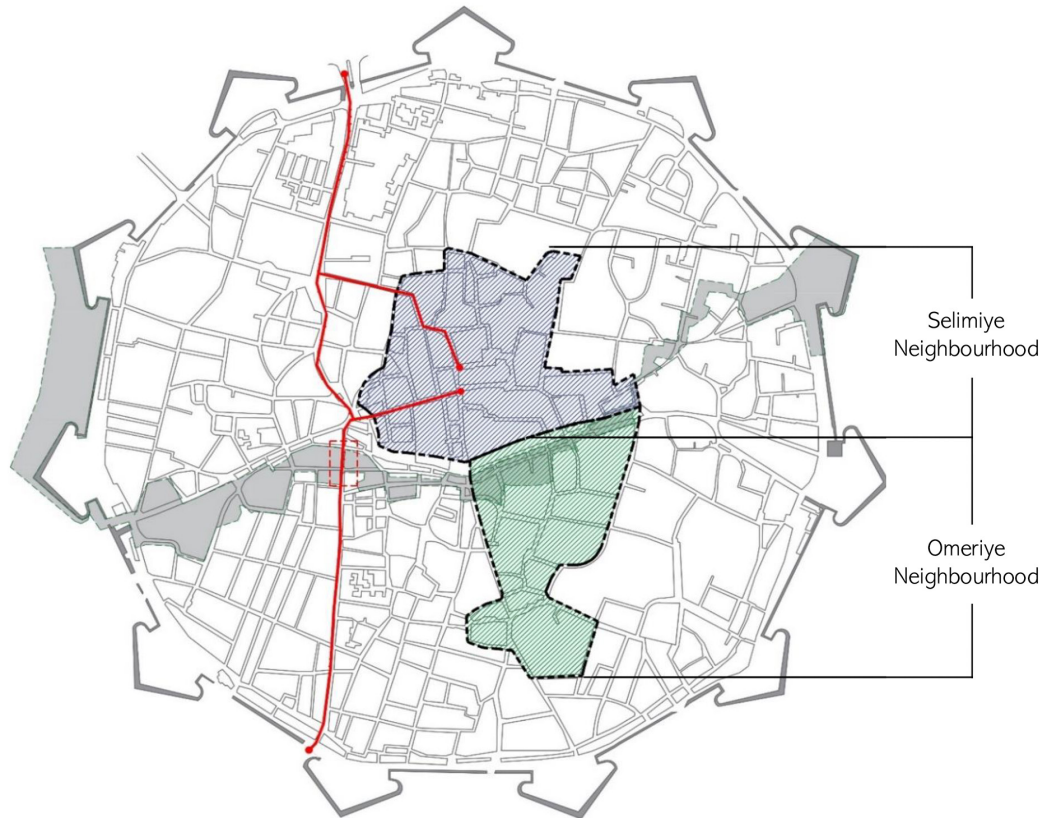
Map of Nicosia showing Arabahmet and Chrysaliniotissa neighbourhood



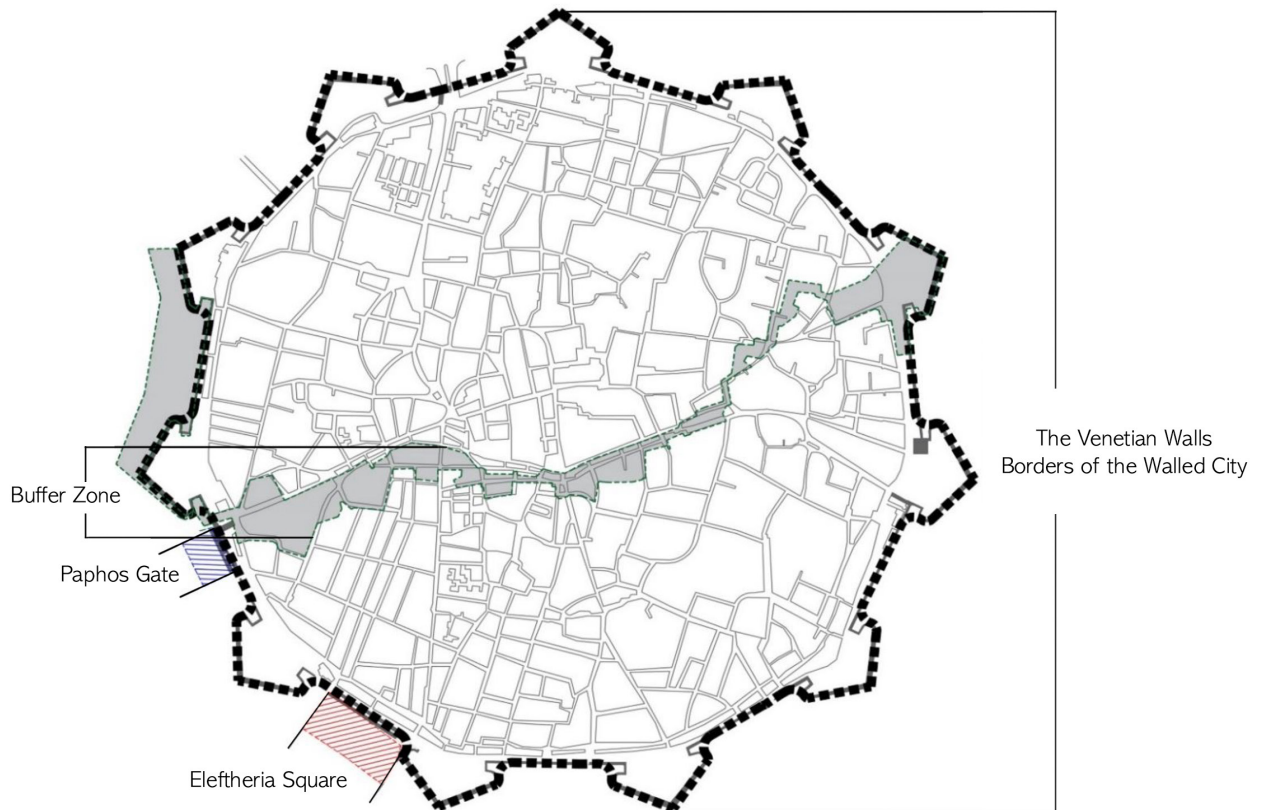
Map of Nicosia showing the Buffer Zone and its border lines



Map of Nicosia showing Selimiye and Omeriye neighbourhood



Map of Nicosia showing Venetian Walls and Eleftheria Square



Appendix IV

Exhibition Diary

Day 1

Visitors 1 (*Architect and social anthropologist*)

He was interested in how I shaped the room. After his exhibition, my exhibition somehow changed the spirit of the room. Especially, the line I created on the top gives room a direction. He said, "I wanted to make a collage!" also he mentioned that even though he's been in Cyprus before, he never checked the border before.

My notes on Visitor 1's exhibition experience

I am glad that I started the day with a friendly smile on his face. After seeing his face, I felt more confident. I could tell he was having a good time by his expression. He couldn't decide where to begin at first, but eventually decided to follow the route I marked with green tape. He noticed the frames in the area I referred to as "seeing through the fragments" and asked if he could photograph them. I received photos of me with my artefacts five minutes after he left. In some point, I thought he see me as a part of my collage room. I was the moving element in the room, changing the image of the collage room every minute.

Visitors 2 (*Anthropologist*)

The tape was the first thing that drew his attention. "Tapes are shaping the room." he stated flatly. He also talked about his scrapbooking project and how to install his collaged books. And he picked some fragments for his book.

Visitors 3 (*Med Student*)

The woman simply turned his head and noticed that an exhibition was taking place next door. Her eyes were drawn to the mines. I invited her to the exhibition politely. She made a direct connection with the image in the history section that was red in colour. "The blood is so powerful," she said, "I can say that something bad happened in Nicosia." And after a brief conversation with her, I discovered that she is studying a degree in medicine.

My notes on Visitors 3's exhibition experience

I did not know the women; I just saw her curious eyes and invited to the room. It was a quick visit. She mentioned that she has something to do and does not have time, but she found it my exhibition seemed so interesting. She spent all her time with first part of the exhibition – history part. And one colour -red- made her interested in the image. I can say that there can be a direct relationship with the subject of her and her understanding. Basically, she saw some blood on the image and remember her practice. Blood makes her to remember surgery maybe. If I am trying to do surgery like Woods, it can be one thing I should be careful that "colouring." – take not to myself think about colours – which colour can have an impact on people and how the colour can change the understanding of image. Or would you give different impression to image with colour.

Visitors 4 (*Architecture Researcher*)

He mentioned that he can learn from visuals. He can say that many details try to say something about the city's history. Flags, their role, he said, I can see the British power on the island. He asked me for the titles of the collaged images and found interesting to watch the collage process videos.

My notes on Visitor 4's exhibition experience

He lost in the details. For each collage, he stayed in front of the images and got closer and spend time. He tried to learn from details. Interestingly, when you look up, instead of focusing the green line I produced by tape, he focused transparent wires I used to hand the lines. He smiled and said "such a complicated way to hang, like spider web, with the light they are getting shinier and more become a part of room, like the room's collage having Nicosia. And he accepted to make a collage with me.

Visitors 5 (*Researcher in Architecture*)

He interested in collages series I called "stuck in time" and wondered about other layers of image for. He gave me an idea that I can prepare different alternative moments for one image so between the layers I can see and show that many things can be happened between the layers, and it can give different perspective.

My notes on Visitor 5's exhibition experience

After speaking with him, I realised that rather than creating a large number of images, I could be more specific. I wondered that what I was trying to convey with each collaged image. Although each person's interpretation of the image may differ, I thought it can be better to concentrate on one team.

Day 2

Visitors 6 (*Musician/Researcher - from Bahrein*)

He directly engaged the idea of making collage and stated that if he used a military image in a collage, he might feel unappropriated due to an ethical issue because he is unfamiliar with Nicosia/Cyprus history and does not want to offend anyone.

With the exception of the curves on the facades, he found Nicosia images to be similar to Bahrain. He murmured a song while passing through the section "Lebbeus Woods and Sarajevo", and he said, "I remember the song about Sarajevo". I remember when I was a child and there was a song in Bahrain during the Bosnia and Herzegovina war. It's in Arabic, but it's about Sarajevo, and it asks, "what is happening to you Sarajevo?"

He questioned the images of meaning. He said probably we will thing differently about collages. "If I put soldier image probably you will understand something different, I will understand different. And there is no end for collage, so I'll stop there." He offered me to read – Tim Ingold making. And he accepted to make collage with me.

My notes on Visitor 6's exhibition experience

He was really interested the exhibition, especially the part "Sarajevo". I can clearly say that he

created a connection with his memories via collages. He always pointed out the geography he grew up in, as I deduced from our conversations while making a collage. His collages were unique to him. By adding something of himself to his images of Cyprus, he attempted to reconstruct his own memories and tell them to me.

Visitors 7 (*Researcher in Landscape Architecture - Netherland*)

She directly engaged with colours and stated that “green and blue so intense. We are working with green and blue in landscapes, but in Nicosia, they present something different. Green is representing the border and limits; blue is kind of peace/sandbags. Line is not always line, it is zone. I like the representation of line here; it is like an actual zone.” And she moved with the videos, “moments are moving in collage process, every minute different and getting interesting”.

My notes on Visitor 7's exhibition experience

It is clear that her background has an impact on her thinking. While she was looking for the collaged images, she tried to find a connection with colours, to understand the space. The green was referred to as a green area of a planted zone by her. It wasn't entirely incorrect; the no-man zone is now covered in green, despite the fact that it was once one of Nicosia's main thoroughfares.

Day 3

Visitors 8 (*Researcher in Architecture*)

He focused on the details of the images. He spent time with each collaged image. Especially in the section of Lebbeus Woods. He did not understand “the green line” and thought it is river cut the city to half. Actually, it was a river before all the conflict, and was filled by sand and became road. And now, it is a border limited by buildings and covered by green.

He also mentioned that he can read my proses from my collages and he gave a title for each section – illustrated image, fragments, individual movement (exposing moment), moment (exposing buildings). But he asked, “Why blue sandbags?” He did not understand why I preferred to use sandbags in blue colour.

He said - “I have been Cyprus before, bet I was not aware that there is a border in island, I just knew that there was a conflict in the island, between Turkish and Greek societies. But how? Can I cross the border? do I need to provide anything?” And asked me “Why I do not have more drawings on collages?”

He is always shocked to see black and white images of people on the coloured collages. At first glance, he did not recognise them. And he gives me a suggestion about how I might make space the next time so that viewers can barely see collages through fragments. He liked the exhibition space, and said -space became a collage.

My notes on Visitor 8's exhibition experience

It is not interesting that he spent most of his time with Woods' part. He is working on object-oriented architecture and experiencing architecture through drawing. So, most probably, he tried to understand Woods' architecture and drawing language. He approached images from architectural perspective, and he did not find so many obvious architectures but make

me realise something about the exhibition. While he was visiting each image with a pure concentration, his shadow also engaged with the images. His shadows became also part of the collage.

Participants and their shadows, movements and also shadows of fragments hanging from top are became a moving collage.

Visitors 9/10/11 (*Researchers in Architecture*)

Visitor 9 interested in the history section. Visitor 10 started to play with fragments. And Visitor 11 focused on the images. Visitor 11 asked, "Where did I get all the images for collages?" and waited for the explanation of the collaged images. And after Visitor 10 asked "Ok, but Why you use collage?" and realised the image of Hitler in collage. And three of them accepted that images I provided for them has an impact on their thinking. And they accepted to make a collage with me. Visitor 11 who has interior designer background accepted that with a collage you can tell the story.

My thinking on Visitors 9/10/11's exhibition experience

I was aware that Visitor 9 and Visitor 10 had experience with Nicosia during their architectural training and were knowledgeable about the island's past. On the other hand, Visitor 11 t also has a Turkish background like me. We all see the events from a similar perspective, I realised after speaking with them. Therefore, it can be said that understanding history from a particular perspective - in our case, from Turkey - has an effect on our thinking and collage-making.

Visitors 12 (*Researcher in Geography*)

He found it quite interesting that I used the Collage as a research method. Collage can be way for bringing together the fragments, cities and their landscapes. And he mentioned that "Collage can be other way of doing something".

My notes on Visitor 12's exhibition experience

He mentioned that in their classes they are also working in Nicosia. Basically, they are working from geography perspective and focusing on the conflict and how the conflict has an impact on city. And I think he recognised my Turkish background in the collaged images.

Visitors 13 (*Researcher in Architecture*)

His first sentence was "making depth through layers". Collage, according to him, kind of architecture. Architects work through the layers, fragments. And he found the section of Woods like a road line. It is flooding in the middle of the exhibition area. And hanged fragments, he stated, gave you a different perspective each time. He offered me to create a section of hanged fragments, he said, take a picture of video of each fragment and bring together like a section. He also asked for some writing about collages.

Day 4

Visitors 14 (*Researcher in School of Business*)

She asked me why I am working on contested spaces and why with collage. And continued to ask why I chose those particular images. According to her, there had once been an experience there, but it is no

longer present. She questioned what the contribution of collage-making to these spaces and Cyprus are. She also questioned my position in collages. She previously resided in Cyprus for a year, but she claims that she has little memory about the conflict. However, she told me that she felt there was active conflict on the island after visiting the exhibition. - "As if there is still war on the island". And from her perspective, it is not true.

My notes on Visitor 14's exhibition experience

She approached the exhibit with a sceptical mindset. I believe it comes directly from her background. She did also PhD in Business. According to her, every PhD has a specific path and needs to be productive with the question "Why?" She claimed that the research exhibition I put on lacked certain details that should have been included in a doctoral research exhibition. She did not have accepted it even if I had told her that collage was an experimental technique. I became a little uneasy and began to doubt the exhibition as a result. Although I admit that I did not adequately convey my intent in the exhibition, my goal was to examine this experimental procedure from a variety of angles. Therefore, I can accept that her viewpoint is wholly different from mine.

Visitors 15 (*Researcher in Architecture*)

She questioned why I used collage and asked me to describe the research methodology I used. And joined me to make a collage. The title she chose for the collage she made: Amputation

Visitors 16 (*Researcher in Archaeology*)

He interested in the Lebbeus Woods and his works. He said that Woods' work could serve as a good illustration of how to conduct research and practise conservation in historic areas. He claimed that while remnants of war could be monumentalised in historical structures, such monumentalising is not possible for in residential areas. According to him, the signs of the war on the residences or apartments are annoying. He added another intriguing point as well. He claimed that the remnants of war discovered in ancient civilizations were distinct from those discovered in modern conflicts. He said he was concerned about whether the current war's scars should be preserved because they appear to be more severe than earlier ones.

My notes on Visitor 16's exhibition experience

After I spoke with John, I am sure that there is a direct relationship between people's background and their perspective. John gave me some valuable idea on two topics. The first one is about buildings. Which structures should keep their war scars, use them as a design element, or completely cover them up? Who should decide how to proceed with this matter and how should it be decided? Can I use collage to respond to these questions? Or how much does the collage contribute to the resolution of these issues? And war remnants from the past are documented in books and museums as a part of history, but what about today? How is it possible for the remnants of a conflict that is still ongoing to be the subject of history books or museums or daily life? How can we strike this balance? How can I handle this dilemma using collage? or Can I use collage for it?

Day 5

Visitors 17 (*BA Student in Geography*)

He stated that despite studying Nicosia and being aware of a border before undertaking fieldwork, he never imagined it to be a real one. "Yes, there was a border but until I see it, I realise that it is real. On the other hand, crossing border was so easy. Every night, we crossed the border and hang out in the northern part. Cheap food and friendly people! Pubs around the border are so nice". And he mentioned that northern part more interesting than southern part. "Greek part is like a normal European city, nothing interesting. The northern part more authentic. The texture of the city is more interesting".

My notes on Visitor 17's exhibition experience

He entered the exhibition in silence and visited it with a somewhat timid expression while carrying a small notebook. I was eager to learn more about his experiences in Nicosia after I discovered that he was from Geography and wanted to ask more deep questions. He was a resident of the United Kingdom who arrived on the island from the south and had the ability to travel to the north whenever he wanted. I was certain that his experience would be completely different from mine.

On the one hand, the reactions when we first saw the border were similar. Although I grew up learning the history of Cyprus and I knew there was a division, seeing the border had a shock effect on me as well. On the other hand, I am not allowed to cross the border. The southern part of the island is a remote area for me that I can see from the border fragments. After our short dialogue, I felt that life, which was only option for me, was another option for him.

Leaving sentimentalism aside, we can say that while our approaches to the border are similar, the north of the island has a different texture than the other side. The two sides of the island appear to have developed differently as a result of various political and economic issues.

Visitors 18 (*Researcher in Architecture (HBB) - from Germany*)

She spent most of his time in the history section. She mentioned how communicative fragments and colours are. Despite her limited knowledge of Nicosia, she admitted, "I recognised through collage's fragments that some conflict was going on in the island". And she added, "Bloody Christmas is so striking. – Colours. "Fragments speak volumes; the striking red, reminiscent of war or something bloody, suggests to me that conflict once ravaged the island". She also thought the hanging components were remarkable. When she visited the exhibition, she said that the pieces provided her with differing perspectives and served as reminders. – "Room became a collage with them". And videos, she stated, help me to understand that collage is going on every minute.

Visitors 19 (*Lecturer in Architecture*)

Absolutely it seems political, he said, but the room is so intense, details are everywhere, so I do not know where I should look. Then he asked about the fragments flying on the ceiling. After learning them they represent the border, he said "The border is quite interesting, seems like a river. I am wondering who draw the border. It is like Pakistan. The story of the green line like a collage. Somebody came and drew a line on the map. And in this case, you are the collagist, you are the power".

My notes on Visitor 19's exhibition experience

After our small talk in front of the door, I questioned my position as a collagist. Because it is impossible to remove my own feeling when I am working on collage. On the one hand, it is something I can use as a subject of collage, but on the other hand, it is dangerous. I am not trying to be General Young and decide about Nicosia. I do not want to say specific about the problems or solve them. I want to make them more obvious to ask question about their spaces.

Visitors 20 (*Researcher in Urban Planning - from China*)

He approached the exhibition with a mild air of timidity. I asked general questions to break up their timid attitude. He claimed to have no knowledge of politics, but he asserted with some force that he had heard that something was happening in the north. When I asked him if he knew where Cyprus is, he replied, "A European country under Turkey". This response, "Under Turkey", is incredibly compelling. I know that he was simply expressing the island's location, but it sounds like he is calling the northern portion the "occupation of Turkey". Fragments, he said, are prodded the whole image. Little ones became whole.

"We don't talk about politics or the government in China", he claimed, "it is sort of against the law". That is why probably, he was too shy to make a comment about collages. Then he started to play with layers. Remove the first transparent layer to see the image. He said "I have never seen this kind of layering before. It is interesting". Then he referred the "Freedom" in the image. He said, May be one day the island became one! I said, - "I do not think so. It is possible may be, but it is not about the people, it is all about the politics". Then we started to talk about architecture, working as an architect and how and why we choose to studied architecture in the area between the stand and the collaged wall. Suddenly, he said, "look! The movie is continuous between us. Look at the flags on it. So powerful, Greek, The republic of Cyprus, The Northern Cyprus and Turkey. And the collage movie between us and on them".

He saw the collaged status. I told them it is me on this collage research. He asked why I put some sandbag material to mouth of the artefact. "It does not have eyes and he cannot speak," he claimed, there are many obligations on it". Then we watched the video again behind the stand's fragments. He said he will remember the conflict thought these fragments.

Visitors 21 (*Political Cartoonist*)

After we spoke about politics, she stood in front of the Lebbeus Woods's line. She referred the image I used for to experiment Woods' collage methods. It was a picture of a building that had been destroyed during the conflict. And she mentioned that she worked with kind of image before and she remember that time how she was working with the details created by war. "Even for the one mark", she said, "I looked it for an hour sometimes to try to understand it." She stated that "working with the paper is poetic It takes time. It pushes you to focus on the details. Look at your videos, look at the process They are something, something about time and space".

Politics give a strong language for criticism. But working with paper bring deepness on it. Paper makes it real, powerful. During the process of working with paper, cutting them, drawing them, - you have moments.

After she looked the collaged imaged produced by perspective drawing, "the deepness", she said, "it is

deep. Potential on it. And the paper let you to do it. Believe the process”.

Visitors 22 (Son of Visitor 21 – Age 5)

While his mom entered the room, little curious eyes followed her. He wanted to play with paper. So, I let him play. He directly took colours. He said, “Blue is my favourite colour”. I asked him to produce a collage for my exhibition. He took one of the images presents the border in Nicosia with green barrel. He coloured it fearlessly. He put blue, red, black, and green. I doubt that he was aware of the conflict or division in this image. He just played with the colours on this image represent the division. Apparently, it is not a border for him. It is not a division image anymore. It is a base for creation. It is a base for his art. He said he produce a river on it and reds are little fishes”. He was shiny. I barely understand his words. After we called his collage “the masterpiece of xxxxx”. Thanks to Ahmed. He gave me more freedom to think on the images represent the conflict.

Day 6

Visitors 23 (Technician from Workshop)

He stayed in front of the Lebbeus Woods column for at least five minutes. After that he moved and asked me “Do you know the meaning of Lefkosa?” I got shocked, because I have never checked the meaning of the city’s name. He continued “I think Greek name means “white”. After we started to talk about the architecture in the island and he asked, “Are they all Greek right?” I offended a bit, but tried to explain that they are all similar, Greek, Turkish. Because they have similar weather, and they are in same geography.

He was confused about my research’s aim. He thought it’s quite interesting research but WHY? And then like to God’s hand of Michelangelo on the collaged wall. “Trilling hands to touch each other but the gap,” he stated. “Inside the gap, something going on”. After we spoke about the island’s culture, foods and drinks, he said “Woods’ projects, such an interesting idea – tissue, healing process.” And I asked him “Should we keep the scars after the war or remove them?” He told me some English phrases – “*Chi?? boys marks*”. I am not sure, but it is about when he was a school, they were showing their marks to each other for flaunt and tell the background stories. But we talked about the condition of housing. How people will live there with all marks. But he really enjoyed the idea of the healing process.

Visitors 24 (Lecturer in Architecture)

He was drawn to the room’s density and the way the collage artefacts covered it, making it appear as though it were occupied by collages. He liked the collage videos. He sat on the bench. He asked me is there any live event going on? I did not understand first, but then I realised that he was asking if I was creating collage in that space. Yes, actually, I did. He advised me to record it and “reflect” the live process to the wall simultaneously. And after asked a question about VIVA! “Are you going to prepare something like this for your viva?” I got stressed and I admitted that I was unsure of what I should be doing to prepare for my final review. And he asked another key question “How will you prepare your thesis?” He offered me to create installation using everything for main purpose and videos can help me to it.

My notes on Visitor 24’s exhibition experience

After our conversation, I got inspired that I can create a room covered with videos and collages but all of them shows total image. Kind of moving collage, always active, both 3D and 4D

collage. I think it is better to start to think about final presentation. How will I use all collage techniques to create the final image of my research? I accept that collage never ends but my research should have end in some point.

Visitors 25 (*Director of Planning*)

I think in the end, she thought she should visit me! Since the exhibition began, I'm probably one of the first faces she sees in the morning.

She started to talk about Northern Ireland, I assumed that she is from Northern Ireland. She asked, "What is the solution for border in Cyprus?" and whenever she said solution, I questioned her "Is it possible to find solution for Cyprus? Or "Is it necessary?" Because it seems that there is no problem for the people in Nicosia. I said, "it is all politics" and she approved me with her head and eyes.

During our discussion she focused on the details in the historical collages. "Do you want me to look from fragments?" she asked, and I told "as you wish." We moved the next part, she questioned again "Can I pass the border?" She was referring to the stand. "Different materials" she stated, "you used, sandbags, paper, colours are quite rich." And the conversation shifted towards the situation in Ukraine. How we going to figure out, when we remove the sandbags.

She asked me, "Are you careful about cutting pieces?" It made me think about my process, Am I being careful? In the beginning, perhaps, but not anymore. "Watching through fragments" she said, "something going on behind the wall, I can see."

Day 7

Visitors 26 (*Professor in Architectural History*)

After passing the door, she directly asked many question,

- What does the collage reveal about Nicosia that cannot be seen?
- How do you see Nicosia as a collage?
- How do you use the collage in the context of Nicosia?
- What are the things that have changed in the city? How deep do you go?

Nicosia is a layered city, and each society has different materiality. How far does your drilling go?

She offered me to prepare timeline for my Nicosia research.

- How should I present a presentation so that others can understand it directly?

Process of division is interesting. I can make process map and show the moment of detours. Such as sandbags, they seem like they are temporary objects, but they calcified and produced different centres in the city. And she continued:

- You should work on the narration technique. Your presentation technique is problematic. What did you find - What will you present?
- May be categorisation can help.
- Tell them what you see differently in the city with collage.
- Woods see something in the city, what are you seeing? Be clear.

Yes, you are doing collage and you have progress but for what? Yes, you thought that collage is productive but what you find, and how?

My notes on Visitor 26's exhibition experience

I could not answer any of Visitor 26's questions. She was asking questions about the limits which I have never had. From her perspective, I use collage to represent something, but in my research, collage is the medium. When she asked, "What did you notice that could not be noticed without using collage?" she was right. I am trying to find the potentials of collage in contested spaces. And more specific, I am trying to get deeper in Nicosia. So, my main aim is to find the potentials of collage in spaces after that use Nicosia as a testing space.

- Collage is never ending story.
- It gives you a story board, it can be changed anytime.
- Between the layer, there are freespaces like Woods' spaces, people are free to shape them. I am not trying to find a solution for Nicosia. I am just trying to make people aware of their potentials. Not just their potentials, but also potentials of the space. The spaces between the layer will be filled according to their life. I cannot say how to live to them, they have to shape their own life.
- On the other hand, collage give these layers and spaces. It is not like drawing or photography. It is not just about the final image. It is about the process. It can be changed anytime. It is not fixed.

Layered city – What is my limit in these layers?

Manipulated image – but why? Woods produced a space for anarchist? people in my case why I produce spaces through collage. To represent them I can create collage section.

How do I create connection between collage and Nicosia?

Collage made me also realised that city consist of fragments. Can my research focus on the spaces that these additions shaped? Maybe I can create a collage on these fragments or collage coming from these fragments.

Visitors 27 (*Lecturer in Architecture*)

He found the room as a collaged space. He asked, "What is the expectation of collage in your research?" and continued "It is nice to have some gaps in creative practice research." "What are you looking for with the collage?" – I think I am not going to produce architecture but other ways of looking/researching/approaching... Collage help me to question the spaces.

Day 8

Visitors 18 (*Lecturer in Architecture*)

A lot of material going on. Position of people is important to see through the fragments. There is a potential in this research. Fragments – It seems that whole city is fragmented.

We thought about the collage image with perspective drawing. He said it's like one of super studio image. He was right, I inspired from them. But I explain him that there is a little image from Berlin wall in this collage and somehow the perspective leads you to pass through the door on the Nicosia border to reach the Berlin wall. Even though both cities had similar situation, I am not sure the situation of wall is similar for both, and reunification is possible for Nicosia.

Day 9

Visitors 29 (BA Student in the School of Architecture – Greek Cypriot)

I was nervous, and I realised that Alma was nervous also. I wanted to ask her more personal questions instead of discussing about collage. First, I asked her whether she crossed the border. And she said "Yes, I crossed the border, but I did not want to stay in, I thought my family, they were there".

Grivas was the biggest mistake.

Choosing fragments is important and paper is powerful.

Appendix IV

Collage-Making with Participants

Participant 1 (Researcher in Architecture)

He picked two main images. One of the images was a picture of the crossing point, while the other picture was a street around the border. And more images for details. He cut the photo of the crossing point in half fearlessly. And worked with details. After 25 min, he told me that he wants to keep his collage like its half, and he mentioned that may be later he can come to add more things on it. He specifically hanged it with clips.



[1] Collage of Participant 1

My learning from the participant 1's collage making process

When choosing the images and cutting them, he did so without any hesitation. Most likely, all he wanted was to have fun. He carefully and slowly cut out the details. He enjoyed many moments throughout the process. He wanted to stop suddenly. And he preferred to pin the details he had cut to the picture rather than stick them, giving the impression that he could change them at any time. Even though he does not know any information about Nicosia, in his collage, he created a sitting area in the middle of the corridor that connected the Turkish and Greek crossings and added some details that reminder of being a British colony.

- Collage has no end.
- Collage always in motion.

Participant 2 (Musician/Researcher in Music)

We discussed about the architectural similarities between Bahrain and Nicosia during our conversation. He said that, with the exception of arches, the city's texture and colour seems similar to those of Bahraini cities. He stated that 'ogee arches' are quite common in the traditional architecture of Bahrain. And then, He attempted to create ogee arch fragment that evoking his culture while trying to avoid discussing politics and conflicts. Interestingly, he picked the sandbag texture for this fragment. He then used tiny, coloured pieces that he had cut to emphasise his arch on the surface of the ruined building.



[2] Collage of Participant 2

My learning from the participant 2's collage making process

He was aware that our understanding of collaged images will be different, so he wanted to stay in safe space. It can therefore be inferred that he is aware that collaged images can be read in various ways by different people and also pose some challenges, particularly if they contain political fragments. On the other hand, his image shaped by his background. He wished to introduce his traditions to Nicosia. He did not worry about the image of the fragments; instead, he chose a completely different colour to make his shape stand out more in the collage. And background has an impact on the process of collage making.

Participant 3 (Researcher in Architecture)

I was aware that she is familiar with the city and its history. First, she asked me to find some military images, and then she covered all gaps of the buildings with images represent the conflict in the island. Fragments seems like erupting from the building. She used sign fragments from the border and all the fragments shape the building. While some of them support the reunification like "YOUR WALL CANNOT DIVIDE US," some of them are about division, "UN BUFFER ZONE." It seems like she wanted to give message with signs – there is a conflict in the island, not just between the countries also between the signs. The building became whole signboard. Moreover, she called her collage "HOL'E CONFLICT." And also, one detail intrigued me. She asked if the woman in a picture she had found was a journalist and she positioned it in the upper-right corner of the building's image after revealing that she was a journalist, as if she was aware of what was happening, and added an eyeball on her head. It seems that while something is happening on the building, a journalist is watching or, in some other way, is aware of everything from a wider perspective.



[3] Collage of Participant 3, titled 'HOL'E CONFLICT'

My learning from the participant's collage making process

It can be said that the background information has an impact of collage making. She directly engaged with the history she knows. She looked for political images, images from border and military. And also, she wanted to show her reaction. There is a provocation on her image. Collage is a communicative tool. Additionally, the collagist background information about subject influences the collage.

Participant 4 (Researcher in Architecture)

She is also familiar with the city's history and has visited Nicosia before. She began the collage process by looking for pictures of politicians. She used images of Bulent Ecevit and his wife, Makarios, Grivas, which were the prominent figures from the conflict, as can be seen from her collage. As a base of collage, she picked image from border and raised the image with the fragment of a ruined building with war scars. Political figures appear among the layers. And interestingly, she cut the ruined building from middle and put the old image of the church which is mosque now between the layers. She also preferred using texts to convey concise messages. She made it using pictures from signs. When I asked her what the collage's name was, she replied, "PEACEPLAYERS," which is also one of the texts in her collage. There is a wish for peace in her collage, but it seems that she is also aware of political difficulties.



[4] Collage of Participant 4, titled 'PEACEPLAYERS'

My learning from the participant 4's collage making process

Once more, background knowledge affects the collage-making process. And it is also obvious that her collage is a message. She tried to explain what she is thinking about Nicosia. On the other hand, she is doing research in architectural conservation. Although it is a small detail in her image, still can be said that she wants to add something from her research background. It's possible to interpret that the main factor her collage is more provocative than others is because she is from Turkey and primarily know the history from Turkish background. Collage can be a message. Background has an impact on collage making process. And a single image can convey several messages.

Participant 5 (Researcher in Architecture)

He preferred to use the image of ruined building as a base of his collage. He carved a gap in the floor of this ruined building and placed a political figure - 'Grivas' who looked like he was climbing out of that gap. And a little girl sweeps her broom into this gap. And also, he also wanted to do another collage. With a similar approach, he cut a gap on surface like a window and put another image which has a deepness under it. It appears to be a tourist who is observing the inside the border from the gap on the border. The soldier on the road, however, is indicated by one finger. Even though, soldier is the only figure on the road, he still wanted to add the fragment - 'dada finger' to emphasise to the soldier. But this time, he highlighted the word "WARNING" in red.



[5] Collage 1 of Participant 5



[6] Collage 6 of Participant 5

My learning from the participant 5's collage making process

He is an interior architect. It can be said that being an interior architect had an effect on choosing interior space and starting collage. Even though the image is not covered with political images, the figure coming from the gap dominated the collage. And again, he is from Turkey, and he does not show any hesitation while using the political fragments. In the second image, he took advantage of the freedom to exaggerate in the collage. He attempted to make a subliminal message by using various fragments that point out in a single point. But for both images, he limited himself in specific space.

Participant 6 (Researcher in Architecture)

She was aware of the conflict in the island and chose an image from the border for the base of her collage. She also wanted to emphasise with letters that the border is "CLOSE" and added eyeballs on the barrels which represent the division in the city. She highlighted the division in her collage. She was aware that there is a two side in the island, Greek and Turkish. Interestingly, she put sign on the Northern Cyprus's flag. And she used a fragment of scissor to create a line and painted one side of the line with red and after she stated that 'My collage's name is "AMPUTATION.'" It could be argued that her collage contains a provocation, but she is also attempting to draw attention to the difficult process of division by using colour and the name she chose.



[7] Collage of Participant 6, titled "An Amputation"

My learning from the participant's collage making process

She is also focused on the division and used collage to express what she is thinking about collage.

Participant 7 (Visitor's son – 5 years old)

Basically, he was not aware of the Nicosia, its history or making collage but to spend time while I was speaking with his mom. He played with papers and colours. He added multiple colours on the image of border. He covered all barrels with colours and then explained that there is a river on his collage. According to him, blue is representing the river and red dots are fish. He created another world on the Nicosia image. He did not care the conflict or division in the image, he just used the image to create another world – world of him. The barrels are still visible among the colours. Image remains related to Nicosia. Like the camera in the upper right, there are still fragments of Nicosia in the image.



[8] Collage of Participant 7

My learning from the participant 7's collage making process

It's interesting that only he didn't try to deliver a message about the city. He simply made a new space using collage. He was the only one to use collage to make another space and work on this space.

ancient
know
fragmentary and dead. There is no
the Corinthian capitals stood on the
ns: only one of them is remem-
copy years, in a chicken run, it sup-
where the hens laid their eggs, and
the Museum of Capitals

N:

been

