

With Love From
Queer-Kuiv-KouinP
CYPRUS

A
MAGAZINE OF LITERARY
and ARTISTIC RESPONSES
TO

POSTCOLONIALISM & PARTITION

FOR LGBTQ+

HISTORY MONTH

2021

The MegaZine is available in two forms!

FreE-MegaZine: Free and released via this paypal link, welcoming donations: <https://paypal.me/pools/c/8xdxPltpD8>

Artists' MegaZine at £25 (+p&p)

Artists' MegaZine is a limited edition bespoke handmade and handwritten multi-sensory haptic Zine, an object that brings to life the postcolonial queer energies and places that feature in the words, images, and sounds. Choose from a rose scented, jasmine scented, or no scented. To pre-order your Artists' MegaZine email us.

All proceeds will go to the LGBTQ+ charity (Accept Cyprus & Queer Cyprus Association)

THANK YOU TO:

Taylor Alana for designing our fig-delicious front cover. Graphic designer (Instagram @tayloralanacreative)

Stella Bolaki for guidance on creating an Artist's Book. Reader in American Literature and Medical Humanities. Scholar of Artist's Books. Co-editor exhibition catalogue *Prescriptions: Artists' books on wellbeing and medicine* (Natrix Press 2017).

Drew Kemp for guidance on making an unacademic Zine. Zine Scholar, founder of Major Threat Academia (punkrockacademia.com), and Associate Professor of curriculum and social justice at Augusta University College.

Tom Parkinson for his knowledge, support and tips on zines, food/history/culture, politics of music and so much more that enriches and feeds us creative wordly humanitarians. Musician and senior lecturer in education and global disparities.

Arianna Koudounas for bringing total peace and love to this project by spreading the word to the poets who contributed to this project. peacefulpoetryofcyprus@gmail.com

Henry Shaw for kindly allowing the use of her stunning artwork to illustrate sections of the MegaZine.

WHO ARE WE?

University of Kent

Write/Right to the World is a group that responds and reacts to the struggles happening now in our postcolonial contemporary 'moment', where we use literature and arts to actively support the right of all people to write, read, express and construct the world, thereby capturing a distinct solidarity and truths for an inclusive differential world

We started at the School of English, University of Kent in February 2021, and we are made up of undergraduates, postgraduates and Faculty staff in the Arts and Humanities Division.

The project has been sponsored by the Centres for Colonial and Postcolonial Studies and Creative Writing, School of English, University of Kent.

It has been co-created together with Bahriye Kemal and the undergraduate and postgraduate student body, who are studying modules based on topics related to queer identities, colonial and postcolonial moments, contemporary literature, rights, activism and outreach.

Rebecca Copsey, Guy Forster-Pearce, IG, Winsome Monica Minott, Kaan Serin, Elizabeth Watson

About the Editors

Kean Serin is a Cypriot, London-born writer and student of English Literature and Film Studies. With an interest in 'non-canonical' forms of telling stories, he experiments with creative prose writing, screenwriting and narrative design in video games. His critical essays, articles and think pieces have been published in a number of gaming websites. As a current student of contemporary literature, he joined the

Megazine project to further understand and define the contemporary moment, in addition to supporting and uplifting fellow queer Cypriots.

Lixi Watson is an English Literature and Creative Writing student at the University of Kent. They joined the Megazine Project to learn about queer communities outside of their Canterbury bubble. In working with the project team, she has also found another community of writers and insanely talented people.

Guy A. Forster-Pearce is a queer, disabled writer and student at the University of Kent within the School of English. Having studied modules relating to contemporary literatures and media ethics, he has focused on honing his poetic skill. He is a volunteer for National Student Pride, the Treasurer for the UKC LGBTQ+ Society where he continues to contribute to creating queer social spaces. He is currently working on his first Anthology Queerid.

Sahriye Kemal is passionate about and actively supports moves towards a differential world. She was born in London to refugee parents from the villages of Köfünye and Pile, Cyprus, and has studied and taught at various universities around the world, including: Cyprus, Japan, Peru and the UK. These moves and moments have inspired her research and impact projects, which are in border/broader crossing of geographical and disciplinary boundaries, with focus on postcolonial and world literature as related to partition studies, East Mediterranean/ middle East studies, island studies, spatial studies, migration and refugees, rights, solidarity and activism. She has published and taught widely in these areas, including authoring the book Writing Cyprus: Postcolonial and Partitioned Literatures of Place and Space (Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literature, 2019), and co-editing Nicosia beyond barriers: Voices from a divided city (Saqi, 2019) and Visa Stories: Experiences between Law and Migration (2013). She is currently writing a book and working on various interrelated projects on the postcolonial East Mediterranean, with focus on literature and arts from Cyprus, Palestine, Syria and beyond. She is a lecturer in Contemporary and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Kent. She is also a poet-performer and her creative work has appeared in various magazines and events around the world. Her work has received numerous prizes and awards, including recent British Academy: Humanities and Social Science Tackling Global Challenges Award. She is a core member and founder of various organisations, including Collectiva Inanna, Exploring the Cypriot Identity, Kent Refugee Help, Social Scientist Against the Hostile Environment.

I.G studies English and American literature at the University of Kent, and has a specific academic interest in postcolonialism and marginalised voices within literature. Her personal goals are to read far more works by authors of colour, specifically South Asian writers, (due to her own South Asian heritage) and work on her own writing which often revolves around religious and cultural traumas, mental illness and love. She joined the project in order to engage closely with queer art, and works, specifically about and by Cypriots responding to tense and queerphobic spaces.

Rebecca Copsey is an English and American Literature student at the University of Kent and is a singer/songwriter and musical theatre lover. She is currently partaking in the right/write to the world module studying literature and activism. She joined the Megazine project to pay homage to queer and fearless family and friends.

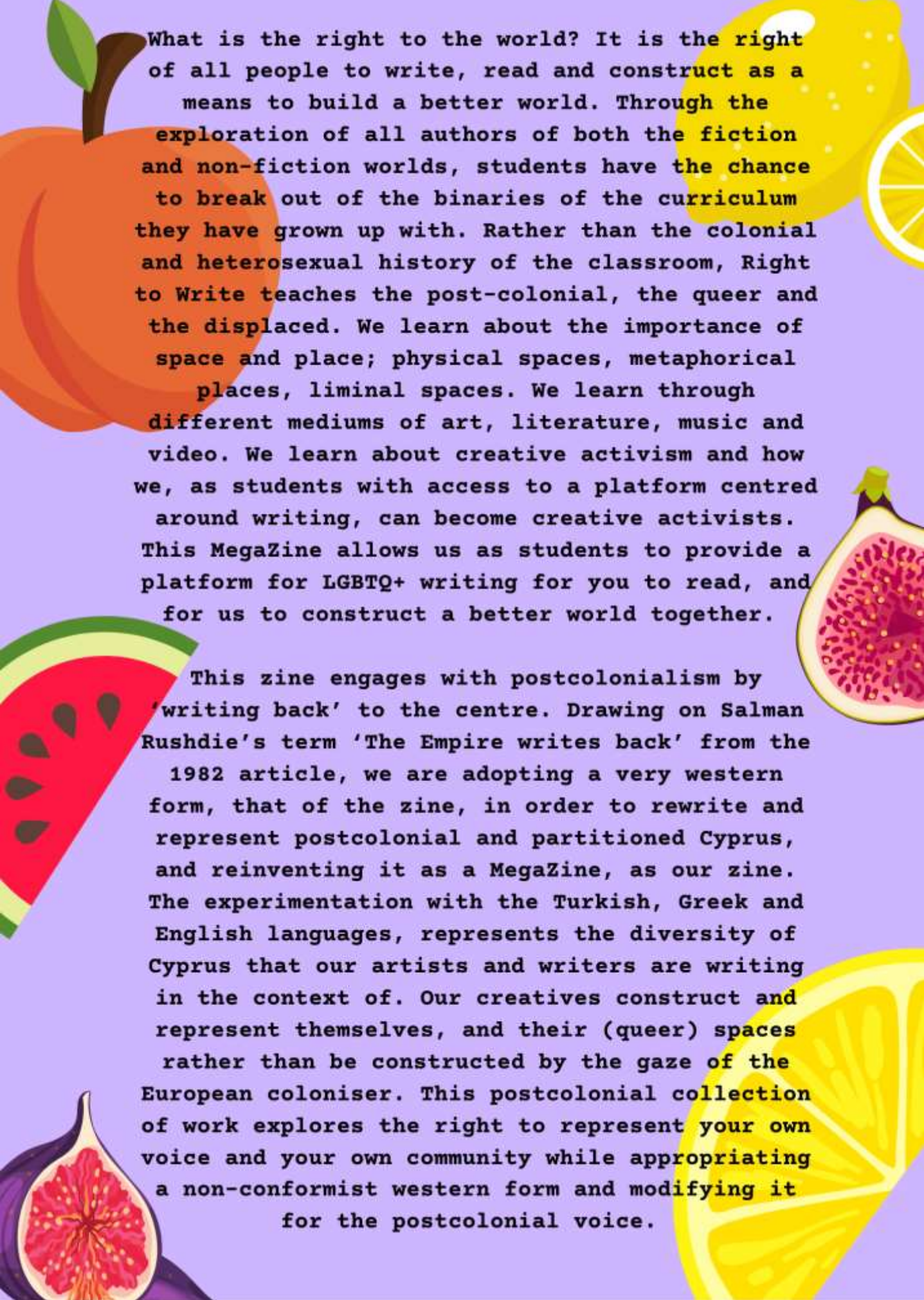
Winsome Monica Minott is a Chartered Accountant. She received two awards in Jamaica's National Book Development Council's annual literary competitions for book-length collections of her poetry. She was awarded first prize in the inaugural Small Axe poetry competition. Her poems have been published in The Caribbean Writer, Small Axe Caribbean Journal, Cultural Voice Magazine, SX Salon, Jubilation, The Squaw Valley Review, BIM magazine, and Coming Up Hot. Coming Up Hot is an anthology of poems featuring eight emerging poets from the Caribbean. Her entry entitled 'Spirits' was named in the top ten entries for the Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize 2015. Her first collection, Kumina Queen, was published by Peepal Tree Press in the UK, (2016) and her second collection Zion Roses will be available on the April 2021, publisher, Peepal Tree Press.

Why did we create this project?

For this LGBTQ+ History Month 2021, we created this MegaZine of literary and artistic responses and reaction to postcolonialism, partition and contemporary struggles.

Our MegaZine has been produced with love from Cyprus and in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, who struggle for their right to Cyprus, right to the Mediterranean, and right to the World.

This MegaZine brings together 40 voices who speak of queerness through poetry, short stories, essays, film, artwork, and their experimentations in English, Greek and Turkish. Through these voices, you will see and hear about the 'LGBTQIA-to-Z' lived experiences related to colonial, postcolonial and partitioned moments, recent struggles linked to anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric in Turkey, anti-corruption peaceful protests in Cyprus, among various other contemporary socio-political failures across the world. These poets, writers and artists together actively read, paint, write, perform and live through 'LGBTQIA-to-Z' rhythms -space/place, time and energy; these voices together challenge and respond to the hostile environments that create sites without rights for the LGBTQ+ community in the island and those beyond. In this process, our MegaZine captures a distinct queer rhythm and solidarity that celebrates 'right to difference' and 'truth of space/space' for the actual production of a distinct queer Cyprus, Mediterranean and world.



What is the right to the world? It is the right of all people to write, read and construct as a means to build a better world. Through the exploration of all authors of both the fiction and non-fiction worlds, students have the chance to break out of the binaries of the curriculum they have grown up with. Rather than the colonial and heterosexual history of the classroom, Right to Write teaches the post-colonial, the queer and the displaced. We learn about the importance of space and place; physical spaces, metaphorical places, liminal spaces. We learn through different mediums of art, literature, music and video. We learn about creative activism and how we, as students with access to a platform centred around writing, can become creative activists. This MegaZine allows us as students to provide a platform for LGBTQ+ writing for you to read, and for us to construct a better world together.

This zine engages with postcolonialism by 'writing back' to the centre. Drawing on Salman Rushdie's term 'The Empire writes back' from the 1982 article, we are adopting a very western form, that of the zine, in order to rewrite and represent postcolonial and partitioned Cyprus, and reinventing it as a MegaZine, as our zine. The experimentation with the Turkish, Greek and English languages, represents the diversity of Cyprus that our artists and writers are writing in the context of. Our creatives construct and represent themselves, and their (queer) spaces rather than be constructed by the gaze of the European coloniser. This postcolonial collection of work explores the right to represent your own voice and your own community while appropriating a non-conformist western form and modifying it for the postcolonial voice.

WHAT DOES THIS ZINE ENGAGE WITH?

If contemporary art is about drawing out the darkness while everyone basks in the light, then there's no better descriptor for this MegaZine than contemporary. The plight of queer Cyprus has too often been hidden, locked away and confined to private spaces and this MegaZine loudly, unashamedly paints the portrait of being queer in a partitioned space and the love, pain, pride and joy that comes along with it.

Authors in this MegaZine focus their attention on their individual experiences, forming and defending their queerness, and painfully representing the dangerous hateful anti-queer rhetoric surrounding them, and representing themselves through art, literature and film.

We believe it is important to amplify authentic queer voices by curating a space through which to express themselves.

The accessibility of our MegaZine was a primary consideration of ours, we wanted our zine to be able to be widely shared in order to reach as many people as possible, while also raising money for LGBTQ+ focused charities.

We normalise encountering these voices within literary environments and generate a praxis of social activism.

By reaching out to a variety of queer and allied voices we have created a contemporary document that passionately rejects homophobia and queerphobia.

WHY A ZINE?

- no rules, judging or conventions; we break and unlearn all that has been forced upon us
- academically unacademic
- responds to rights right now
- form focuses on politics, society, culture



- its motto, 'keep it simple, make it fast'
- its motto of no rejection, we do not reject; we accept everyone and everything without any exclusion
- anti-establishment
- majority left thing
- 'create a space of freedom. A space without fear. A space for expression.' (Major Threat <https://www.punkrockacademia.com/>)
- enables us to come up with creative ways to disseminate ideas. (Major Threat)
- independent and self-published

- providing a safe and creative platform for artistic and academic voices
- accessible and free
- DIY ethic and aesthetics
- rapid, transient, vibrant
- Marxist premise, taking over the means of production
- creates a space for outsiders, exiles, subcultures

- much more content than a regular zine
- a larger platform for all voices
- not a regular zine, it is a postcolonial zine
- contemporary, responding to mega socio-political powers that destroy our world
- postcolonial, writing back and speaking truth to mega socio-political impacts of colonialism that dominate and devastate our world
- it's mega-scope can carry the weight of the postcolonial & contemporary LGBTQIA+-Cyprus experience
- was a punk thing, but we made it a postcolonial, contemporary, 'LGBTQIA-to-Z' megaHumanitarian thing
- was an Anglo-American thing, but now we made it a Cypriot, Turkish, Greek, Syrian, Egyptian, Jamaican, Palestinian, Chinese thing, in short, its a global thing, a megaGlobal thing

WHY a MEGAZINE?

- MegaZine = No restraints on voice it includes everyone, and rejects the notion that a zine has to be short, we have varied voices, identities and works. Thus, our MegaZine is an uncontrolled wild collection of queer postcolonial and contemporary voices related to Cyprus.



Get to know Everyone...

- Alev Adil**, Motherhood, Memory and the Impossibility of Fidelity (@alevadil twitter)
- Ametis**, Artwork (@ohmygoditshappeningagain instagram)
- Okan Bullici and Enver Ethem**, There but not there
- Koraly Dimitriadis**, Red gypsy violinist, Me myself and love (www.koralydimitriadis.com, @koraly_poet instagram @koralyd twitter [Facebook](#) [YouTube](#))
- Anastasia Dolitsay**, My wife went to war (@uvglv instagram)
- Anastasia Gavalas**, Fanouropita (@anastahini instagram and twitter)
- Diana Georgiou**, Against Privacy (Notes on Cyprus Pride)
- Mine Gündüz**, Gemiler
- Mete Hatay & Neşe Yasin**, Queer Singer Beats On Homophobic Nationalism, Behiç Gökay
- Stelios Kapnisis**, Danger Danger, Queer Escapades, Kahve (Instagram: alepoudelispoetry / alepoudelis)
- Stavros Stavrou Karayanni**, Gardening Desire
- Irene Kattou**, A Rainbow of Encounters (@body.art_i instagram)
- Kemal Kemal**, Be you Be Venus (@photoregenerate instagram)
- Alexander Koumoullis-Guest**, Sheftalias among charcoals (@alexgela instagram)
- Charitini Kyriacou**, African DNA (www.xaritini.com)
- Leman**, "Once Upon a Time" (@lemanpoetry instagram)
- Despina Michaelidou**, We need space, My Name is Queer
- Haji Mike**, Mihalakis (<https://hajimike.com/>)
- Daniele Nunziata**, We Sail in Love
- Tamer Öncül**, NAKED, CROW, MR. OWL
- Hüseyin Özinal**, Fugitive Bodies Exhibition (<http://huseyinozinal.com>)
- Constantinos Papageorgiou**, Genocide
- Maria Petrides**, WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON, Tendering Pink Readings (@petridesmaria instagram & facebook, @mpetrides10 on twitter.)
- Zoe Piponides**, Rosy's Formula, Ize
- Lysandros Pitharas**, Kavafis, Green Line
- Marios Psaras**, 'Thin Green Line'
- Kamil Saldun and Sholeh Zahraei**, 'The Hunt' (thehuntfilmcyprus@gmail.com; <https://www.facebook.com/TheHunt171>; <https://www.instagram.com/thehuntshortfilm>)
- Serhan Salih**, Depression, Anxiety – The Thoughts, see me now!, Artwork (<https://sarkerink.tumblr.com/>)
- Lefki Savvidou**, Art
- Constantia Soteriou**, Red Lefkosa Dreams
- Emre Soykan**, Bird Wall Painting and Sculptures
- Valentini Stavrou**, A whore named George
- Ty Tzavrinou**, The Last Time (@londonjersey Twitter, @kiinktini Instagram <https://www.facebook.com/TyTzavri>, londonjerseypress@gmx.com)
- Gürkan Uluçhan**, last 24 hours of the third gender in mekong
- Neşe Yaşın**, Rainbow Children
- Marilena Zackheos**, Bottleneck, Alice B Toklas on Her Way, Dancing at a Lesbian Bar

A Message of Solidarity...

Anastasia Gavalas - Solidarity to all those who are fighting against state power and who continue to resist in spite of it. ACAB.

Maria Petrides - LGBTQ+ rights are the basic human rights that we shall continue fighting for.
Monumental protests of these months have shown our messages are strong and clear:
we resist corruption, authoritarianism, racism, homophobia-transphobia.

Constantia Soteriou - Democracy can and will rise above everything and anyone!

Ty Tzavrinou - Liberation frightens oppressors; while we live courageously, they live objectionably. We're not a disease to be cured, but rather, we're a kinship of mettle and solidarity to be feared.

Diana Georgiou - 'The most revolutionary thing one can do is always to proclaim loudly what is happening.' Rosa Luxemburg.

Stelios Kapnisis- Fascism and corruption have long overpowered the true and honest voices of our people and our communities here in Cyprus. LGBTQ+ people suffer greatly with identity dysphoria because of the structural manipulation and the system that mould us. It's finally time to rise up once more.

Koraly Dimitriadis - Cyprus has the potential to be better than this. Love is love. Corruption is dishonesty.

ALEV ADIL - WE ARE MOVING SPACES, EACH ONE OF US, CARRYING WITHIN THEM A SMALL SUBTERRANEAN SUN, A FRAGILE YOLK OF ENERGY, WE ARE STAR SHIPS OF LIGHT, IN THE SEA OF TIME.

Anastasia Dolitsay - Fear is a powerful weapon used to minimise and control us. No more fear, but a better future. Together we stand stronger against state violence!

Irene Kartou - In solidarity with my fellow protestors that experienced police brutality: We won't be silenced... This is just the beginning!

WM Minott-"Natural Justice" is what we should all search for, it is what we all deserve. Equity is still only a buzz word spoken when it suits the game makers. No equity, no justice. It is important to encourage each person to search for truth, for when we have found it, the world will be a safer space. The module (Right / Write to the world) emboldens participants to join the search, to agree or to dissent - to be heard in classrooms and in the town hall and the halls of justice in each city.

Solidarity Continued...

Exploring the Cypriot Identity expresses our unconditional solidarity. As an organisation committed to free expressions of Cypriot identities, we stand with all LGBT+ Cypriots and resist anti-LGBT+ abuse in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. Co-signed: Ilaeira Agrotou-Georgiou, Anthony Anaxagorou, Bahriye Kemal, Arianna Koudounas, and Daniele Nunziata.

the streets of Nicosia though, we reclaimed the one and final content, the Hope we only knew through myths, and it has now been engraved in our collective memory for the days to come. We will water it and nurture it, until it lays its roots deep into our new mythologies of being, that change won't seem like a dream.



Collectiva Inanna: Diversity, resistance, peace, honesty and the eastern Mediterranean are concepts and spaces that excite us. To see them practiced and reflected in this MegaZine, through such colourful and creative expressions, is delightful. To go beyond the page and include music and screenings at the live launch event is priceless. Solidarity in person and on the page, for now and for the future. Collectiva Inanna is proud to stand in solidarity with you. (Bahriye Kemal, Maria Kouvarou, Reem Maghribi, Manuella Mavromichalis) <http://collectivainanna.com/>

Hüseyin Özinal, Our island, which has a 15-year history of LGBTQ + struggle, divided by a war I have lived, north or south, Turkey or in another country, will continue the LGBTQ + struggle until all people of the world are equal and discrimination is over.



Cypriots protest corruption

Protesting Artist Injured- Anastasia Demetriadou (Nama Dama)



Now, more than ever, people who fight tirelessly for peace and love are becoming stronger because we are realizing the power we hold when we stand together.

Ioulita Tmz, in the protests of 13 & 20 February the Cypriot people stomped on the colonial myth that we are the submissive people of the Mediterranean Sea. There was a reclamation of a voice that was always there, screaming from the inside, screaming from our grandma's sealed lips for so many years. This time we didn't ponder into the abyss of the past, we actively demanded a future. Pandora's box was unsealed in the blood-stained island of olive trees, propelling divisionist policies, sexist mentalities, racist realities, golden passports, and golden dreams that turn into dust. In



Solidarity Continued...

DAYANIŞMA METNİ

by Tamer Öncül

While drifting into the dizzying vortex of our accelerating life, a tiny virus slowed our speed and slowed the world: "Take a moment and think," he said to us. Imperialist wars of interest, religious and racial conflicts, sexual and gendered marginalization, attacks, exploitation, impoverishment, and intolerance, all continue.

The powers that have built their empire through FEAR continue to draw on the global fear created by the Pandemic. Using this fear, they further erode freedom, justice, peace, and all human values; they are trying to keep alive the "Fortresses of Power" that are crumbling with pressure and violence.

When people try to resist, they are targeted by brutal attacks.

Whilst angrily watching the violence inflicted on students at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, we suffer for not being able to do anything beyond messages of solidarity.

News of disproportionate violence targeted at those who rise against fascism, injustice and discrimination are coming from all over the world.

This was what happened in Nicosia on 13 February. The violence against young people exercising their right to legal action sent a message suggesting "The Strong is Right!"

Although the virus does not discriminate between religion, race, gender, social status, the INEQUALITY created by raging capitalism has begun to manifest itself in the process of prevention and treatment. While "Opportunistic Trade" has increased the production of hygienic products, such as masks, gloves, billions of people have lost jobs, become poorer, and more vulnerable to the virus. In reaching the vaccine, we clearly see the poor-rich distinction. Poor countries have almost no chance of reaching the vaccine.

The virus has turned into a "Global Weapon" in the hands of the Transnational Trusts and their fascist representatives. They have backed up their expensive war toys ever since they discovered that this WEAPON is cheaper and more effective than nuclear-chemical missiles.

People have (as always) two options: Rising against the Fascism, exploitation, racist-discriminatory oppression, injustice, and violence; or bow down and join the "New Slaves" class

"The **bite** of conscience, like the **bite of a dog into a stone**, is a stupidity." says Nietzsche.

In order not to regret our future, instead of biting the stone, we lunge it into the face of fascism.



**COLONIZER
GUILTY OF
FUCKING UP OUR
DANCE MOVES**

Cyprus:

Mo(ve)ments, Memory & Dance

Moving, he gazes at the viewer through playful eyes, arched over by determined eyebrows and with a faintly discernible smile. His brightly coloured robe elegantly drapes his dancing body. With his right arm raised and left hand lowered, the young dancer seems to move with a lightness and a fluidity. He gives the impression that he is gliding through space, time, history, sensibilities. His clappers add rhythm and percussive articulation to a body whose longing appears palpable in the image. In the second Ottoman miniature a group of three dancing boys become the focus of the scene. They gaze at different directions and this adds to the liveliness of the moment, complemented by the gestures of arms and torso that depict the energy of the dance. How can we relate to these figures in hand-painted copper plates from centuries ago? How can we communicate with Ottoman miniatures of dancers and musicians? Both

images invoke a queer nostalgia not for a past that we have lived and experienced, but for a historical moment when artistic embodiment and expression become possible in a context that inspires creative ways of being in our body. The dancing bodies of dancing boys cite a certain cosmopolitanism capable of intimating moments that go far beyond ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and artistic investments in cultural exchanges. They transgress and incite ways of conceptualizing the body's aspiration of sexual transcendence; sensing a sexual pulse whose passion and transformative qualities render it indomitable. And this is what these images may do for us today when our daily life is assaulted constantly by still and moving images. Hand-painted copper plate engravings and Ottoman miniatures travel through time,

From Dancing Fear & Desire Race, Sexuality, and Imperial Politics in Middle Eastern Dance,
Wilfrid Laurier University Press,
2004

cultures, languages, to imbue in us the posture of a desiring heart whose beats time the choreography that synchronizes the body's surge of **sexual transformations and creative emotions.**



Mo (ve)ments

I want Cyprus to make sense to me as an imaginary erotic site. Why the obsession, you might

Photo of a hand-painted copper plate engraving from 1760-1780, representing a dancing boy playing clappers. A dancing boy was called *koçek* which means "little camel colt." He is in a yellow robe with a sash, a dagger, and a turban. Most dancing boys came from non-Turkish cultures of the Ottoman Empire. (Caption by Elizabeth Artemis Mourat. Photo, courtesy of the private collection of Elizabeth Artemis Mourat.)



wonder. The forces of conquest and domination (colonial, state, church and so on) must be understood as power relations that inscribe themselves on the body. Such power relations are what William Spurlin refers to when he argues that the sexual and struggles for erotic autonomy form significant axes of analysis (189). Moreover, dance and the erotic share one significant similarity: they are both endowed with “transformative powers” which, as Spurlin again notes (200), have been completely unrecognized by ideological analysts. The Cyprus Republic’s anxious but insistent heterosexual posturing has obliterated the rights of sexual minorities and

deferred necessary retheorizations of nation, citizenship, sexuality, and identity. At moments when these rights

**Do Not Homogenize
Different Dance Traditions.
Perform and Play with
Them ALL.**

could not be obliterated, they were completely trivialized and mocked with self-righteousness. Heteronormativity, as a normalizing regime, perpetuates its ideological longevity sanctioned in its cause by the Republic.

Since the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkish troops, the words “Den Xehno” (which literally translate into “I

don’t forget”) have solidified into a ubiquitous slogan encountered everywhere from newspapers to self-adhesive stickers on car windows and shops. Unfortunately, the inflexible and ideological bias of this slogan has sought (and succeeded largely) to fixate Cypriot consciousness and has obliterated other narratives from surfacing and affecting in any substantial way the cultural and political landscape. In a strong sense, “Den Xehno” has been an attempt to dictate and control the subject’s memory from within. The following three moments form part of an amnesiac practice that is, for me, a site of resistance and a subversion of the “Den xehno” slogan.

Mesaoria, 4 June 2003

With Spurgeon Thompson, a friend and colleague, we are driving towards Famagusta to attend and present at a conference at the Eastern Mediterranean University. It is my first trip here after thirty years. In 1974, the border that divided the two parts of Cyprus was sealed with blood and destruction. Two months before I would not have been able to

attend the conference, but because of the recent and somewhat unexpected development (the ease of restrictions in movement between the two parts of Cyprus) my participation at the event becomes a possibility. It is an overwhelming experience. The landscape speeds past us like a dream. The early morning light spreads across the Mesaoria plain gently urging the subtle and shifting hues of its stunning composition of rocks, plants, and earth to reveal themselves and begin their transformation. In my eager eyes, the earth seems abundant, fertile, and loving. As if the landscape conceals an oracle, I am begging it to speak, to narrate, and it indulges me— but only half-heartedly since it remains absorbed in its vibrant intercourse with the light. Mesaoria—with its old villages and river beds dense with eucalyptus, donkeys, and with the Pentadaktylos mountain range offering generously its imposing definition. I am thinking of Spivak again: the gaze I occupy has been inflected by my history. It is the sight/site into which I emerge and,

although I do not want to privilege it, I do need to use it. How can I inhabit a different body and attempt another gaze? In the delirium that surrounds Cyprus's accession to the European Union, and the presumption of those Greek Cypriots who are keen to show off the official signature that confirms their European status, I insist on Mesaoria's non-Europeaness. I long to see its body as a confluence of narratives that reverberate across space and time, setting each Cypriot body into motion.

A Gym in Nicosia, September 2002

"Wa rimshi asmarani/Shabakna bil hawa" ("the eyelashes of the swarthy one/have entangled me in the nets of love") (Abdel Halif Hafez, "Gana el Hawa." Mohammed Hamza, Baligh Hamdy)

Strangely, my focus on exercise allows me to observe people around me more acutely. Cypriot men must have the thickest and most languorous eyelashes I have ever set my hungry gaze upon; usually dark, playful, elongated, and entangled in

Belly Dance Nomenclature

Belly dance, danse du ventre, Middle Eastern dance, Oriental dance, and tsifteteli are different names with a related dance idiom. These are hybrid art forms fraught with political problems. Belly dance and danse du ventre have been absorbed by Western male heterosexist discourse. Danse du ventre denotes the French colonial conquest of the Middle East, linked to imperial soldiers' heterosexual desire for colonized bodies. Oriental dance conflates auto-exoticization and colonial dynamics. Raqs Sharqi, or "Dance of the East," is an Arabic term, especially in Egypt, linked to European term "Dance of the East" (also "Χορός της ανατολής" in Greek). Raqs Sharqi and belly dance are used interchangeably, both derive from danse du ventre of the early Orientalists. All stereotyped and linked to exoticism and eroticism.

their narcissistic self-absorption. Indifferent to the mechanical, often macho gym postures, eyelids indulge playfully and dance away with indifference. I relish the illicitness of such gazing at Cypriot male corporeality. In the teachings that we were meticulously indoctrinated by, hangings, killings, and beatings have been valorized and narrated endlessly as

epics of remarkable adroitness and heroic national sacrifice. Purity of patriotic feeling in the midst of barbarity must, we learned, prevail over the anamnesis of contaminated passions and erotic possibilities.

Male-Female Dance Nomenclature
Khawals, Gink, Kocak, Ghawazee, Ghawazee Derogatory Terms today.
Khawals, is an Arabic term for Arab male dancers, and *Gink* is for Jewish, Armenian, Greek and Turkish male dancers. *Kocak* is a term for male dancers in the Ottoman Empire, who were mostly Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. In both Turkey and Egypt, these are now derogatory terms to mean transvestites, transsexuals, homosexuals. *Ghawazee* is Arabic for female dancers in Egypt, now a derogatory term meaning dishonourable woman. When the *ghawazee* were subject to banishment, they adopted the *Alneh* (plural *awālin*) meaning learned respected female singers of old oral tradition linked to slave singers of pre-Islamic times, who sang behind a wooden lattice because visibility engenders contamination.

Kalem Restaurant in Northern Nicosia, 17 August 2003

In an evening of speeches and performances that I organized jointly with Sylvia, my friend and belly dance teacher in Nicosia, I deliver a talk entitled

"Dancing to the End of Love." Zehra, a new Cypriot friend from the Turkish side, is translating my words into Turkish. I use "dancing" in the title because I prefer the gerund form instead of the imperative "Dance Me," with its suggestion of a partner (which I think Leonard Cohen has in mind for his song "Dance Me to the End of Love"). I am a solo dancer and any suggestion of leading a partner or being led freezes me completely. "Dancing to the End of Love" spins and undulates with a power that its unique grace breathes forth and plagues me with questions before, during, and after the event. In the emotional realm, where do we imagine that geographical point where Love ends? And how do we comprehend that space that dance traverses as it carries us with its flow to reach that place of ultimate fulfillment—that ecstatic telos where we consume the sacraments of desire and passion, in order to trans-form? And is the point of departure for this course always marked and accessible? Could we start from anywhere to "dance to the end of love" or does this place need

designation? I also feel a strong connection between "dancing to the end of love" and memory—a certain nostalgia as if we have already been at this place but never truly experienced it. Dance is very much about finding a home. Perhaps not many people think about it in those terms, but it certainly helps me when I do.

All this questioning and speculation do not make it to the talk. The moment at Kalem requires a delicate balancing between gentleness and pragmatism in dealing with the issues that the evening sets out to thematize. So, adorned and hip-scarfed, I am performing to "Og` lan, Og` lan," a *tsifteteli* sung in Turkish by Stelios Kazantzides, quite possibly the most beloved Greek male voice ever. I dance and play finger cymbals before an audience of Cypriots—Greek and Turkish. Abruptly, presumably because of some technical problem, the CD player stops but my audience continues to clap the rhythm and sing the lyrics in both the Cypriot dialects, urging me to continue

**BELLY DANCE, DANSE DU VENTRE, MIDDLE EASTERN DANCE, ORIENTAL DANCE,
ANDTSIFTETELI, DANCE OF EAST, DANSÖZ ÇİFTETELI**

dancing to their singing and clapping, and my finger cymbals. (What the Greek-Cypriots are singing is a familiar song that I have known but never thought of as the Greek version of "O'glan, O'glan," always considering it a different song.) It becomes a rare moment in this courtyard of a humble restaurant in old Nicosia—a performance that evokes a multitude of feelings, impulses, desires both for dancer and audience. In this constant shift between spaces and performances lie resistance and meanings, useful constructions, and deconstructions. The recorded song then returns and blares through the loudspeakers,

sounding distorted but dynamic, Kazantzides's voice a little clipped but completely new, as if the song has been given another birth. As the curtain falls on my performance here, and separates me from my virtual audience, I will hurry backstage to change into other costumes, in those magical dressing rooms, which afford possibilities of seeing and transformations, so that I prepare to go onstage yet again for the abuse and exaltation, disapprobation and dancing love which are evoked in my Cypriot drama.

'the all-but-forgotten role of *almeh* (literally, a learned woman), spoken of by nineteenth-century European visitors to the Orient such as Edward Lane and Flaubert. The *almeh* was a courtesan of sorts, but a woman of significant accomplishments. Dancing was only one of her gifts; others were the ability to sing and recite classical poetry, to discourse wittily, to be sought after for her company by men of law, politics, and literature. (Edward Said "Homage to a Belly-Dancer" 350)'

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To Know More Read: *Dancing*

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LYSANDROS

PITHARAS

KAVAFIS

11 o'clock, he locks the door
and into Alexandrian Streets full of commotion, makes his way
in these few hours his liberation must be complete

Oh the torment!

He roams
catches the glance of strangers betraying desire
their limbs, their lips, he follows..

First are men
then another from street corner to street corner
never once approaching them, so desperate is his love,
so complete that he stares through them,
saying nothing.

And this, one must say, is the epitaph of his inglorious love,
this dance with the city.
This ancient search,
that with each step nearer to the morning begins the possibility
of another night, another imagined kiss, leading nowhere.
The roar of traffic, the commotion,
the intoxication of the opiate of his dream as he walks
and walks going nowhere.

As he walks and the sun finally appears bidding the morning
he wrapping his coat more firmly around him
and suddenly betrayed by light
embarrassed by the pleasure of what might have been...

Green Line

I can't see this green line.

Textures are more useful,

like the crevices this finger traces around
your masks

and the damp breathe of those still alive

and the theatre of sighs

as we post our condemnation to various
presidents,

the acid envelope's lip

and sometimes our little towns are quiet

and only flags flutter as tributes to
silence,

and I poke my tongue

into the hole of my history

and wriggle my toes in the damp sand,
beyond the cafeteria,

and observe that I can't see the green
line, I just can't see it.

I can only see gold,

and the eyes of my people blacker than
embers,

and the strong smell of their lovemaking,

and secrets which they say nestle in their
breasts,

standing like monoliths looking toward the
sea,

saying nothing

as if they are chanting.

Lysandros Pithandros was born in the UK to Cypriot parents. English became his native language, and he wrote in order to express the awkward feeling of being a citizen of the twentieth century but having ancient origins, of being a Cypriot Londoner who finds it hard to understand the 'green line' and of being a young man facing death. Being a gifted musician, a man of many talents and having a great sense of curiosity; he died at the age of 32. The posthumous collection *I am the Twentieth Century* (Kochias Publications, 1999) has a selection of his

Diana Georgiou is a writer and curator based in London. Her recent co-curated project EcoFutures (London, 2019) focused on the implications of ecological issues on gender, race and sexuality and involved 10 partner organisations and 7 venues with the participation of over 70 artists, theorists, and activists. Attentive to the sonic resonances of language, her textual work also takes the form of recorded sound poetry and performative live readings. She currently writes about the horrors of violence and the difficulty of their narration. Her debut novel *Other Reflexes* is forthcoming with Book Works.

Against Privacy (Notes on Cyprus Pride)

'Aphrodite's land is not an idyllic mythical landscape as depicted in so many tourist guides that orientalise the island in the process of making it attractive to Western tourists. It is, rather, a landfill of grief and inane discourse on love.'

- Stavros Karayanni



Some of the comments on here that question the purpose of this parade simply justify its necessity rather than bring it into doubt. Cyprus is one of the worst places to live as an LGBT person in Europe. It is sad fact that many people openly deny certain communities their legitimate rights while they defend their own adamantly. Being gay is not simply about gay sex. It's not the same as saying what a man gets up to with his woman in the bedroom should stay in the bedroom. People have to stop sexualising homosexuality. Ignorance and prejudice must be countered by standing up to it in ways like this parade; a highly visible, informative, inclusive and friendly event. I commend those attending as many of them will face discrimination or consequences just for attending... and yet people still question its purpose.

'Being gay is not simply about gay sex,' asserts a commentator in an online national newspaper. Then what is it about? Why were over 4500 people marching on the streets of Nicosia on Saturday 31st of May 2014? "Same Love - Equal Rights" read the slogan conceived by the Greek Cypriot LGBT association Accept. *Homo amor* would be Latin for *same love*. On the other hand, homosexual is not the practice of love, it's the practice of

sexuality with the *same* sex. As divorce rates and one-night stands demonstrate, sex and love are not always compatible, possible or the ultimate aim of interpersonal relations. Yet, if love is indeed the objective, I do not know of any legal consequences or of any restrictions on *loving* a person of the same sex. It's the sexual practice of same sexed bodies that is castigated and driven into invisibility. It's the sex in *homo-sex-uality* that flares up society's fantasies - fantasies of same sex that, for reasons unknown to us, seem intolerable.

Since so many people took a stand in support of this plea for (loving) equality, exceeding the few hundred expected to turn up, one

wonders what exactly was made visible in the process. Evelyne Paradis, executive director of ILGA Europe, stated that the parade 'sends an important message of hope especially for young people who have still to come out and need role models and should not feel afraid.' During the parade a series of visible role models were put forward to address and speak out for the right to same sex *loving* and for the right to do so without being discriminated against. Amongst the role models, who consisted mainly of straight politicians, was the pop star and icon Anna Vissi. 'If people were really honest with themselves,' Vissi once said in an interview, 'they would recognize their bisexuality.' She drew huge applause when she quoted one of John Lennon's lines: 'Don't hate what you don't understand'. Is the implication that Cypriot society does not understand love? Highly unlikely given over 4,500 people present in the name of (same) love, and from what we hear from fellow nationals, tourists and the ex-pat community, Cyprus is a *lovely* place, home of the goddess of *Love*, surrounded by a tightly knit, bickering, opinionated yet *loving* society. Even the Cyprus Tourism Organisation launched a campaign in 2013 with the slogan 'Love Cyprus'. Coincidentally, two days before Pride, the

British Royal Air Force sent up their Red Arrows to airbrush our sky with pompous displays of heart-shaped symbols. It was the fiftieth annual display of the colonizer's *love* for our island. The same empire had incorporated *Section 171* into the Cyprus Criminal Code under **'Offences Against Morality:**

Any person who (a) has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature, or (b) permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him **against the order of nature** is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years.

This is the very law penalizing homosexual conduct that activist and architect Alekos Modinos battled for six years. After appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, decriminalization was finally enacted, in 1998. The grounds for his appeal was that the imported colonial law contradicted *Article 8* of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, which states:

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.



In this well-argued legal case, Judge Pikis' dissenting position held that 'the risk of private prosecution is inexistent' and that 'no private prosecution was ever raised concerning homosexual acts in private.' He maintained that 'adults engaged in homosexual acts in private cannot, under any circumstances, be regarded as the victims of the conduct in which they

voluntarily engage.' And so, Pikis opposed the amendment of *Section 171* as *Article 8* (everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life), in his judgement, comes to overrule it. What Mr. Pikis unwittingly highlighted is that 'private life' is a very protected matter, at least according to the general understanding of laws in Cyprus; it may come to trump any other legislation as long as national security, public safety, health and morals remain intact. The main concern here, as regards human rights, society and freedom, is the outdated legal system that has legislated our ideas of morality. I wonder whether lawyers could reasonably be expected to offer a defence (for rapists, paedophiles, persons held with drugs / abusive partners) by brandishing the *Article 8* card. Your neighbour could then



shoot up heroin in their veins, molest their own child in the privacy of their home and exclaim, **'Well, Article 8 states that you have to respect my private life .**



After all, it does not threaten national security, public safety, economic well-being, or the protection of morals and the rights and freedom of others.' There is an

inherent contradiction here, as paedophilia and homosexuality were both under the umbrella of 'Offences Against Morality'. Why didn't the case of *Modinos v Cyprus* bring up the question of morality instead of respect for private and family life?

I am drawing this crude analogy to highlight four issues, namely, a) how homosexuality, legally, becomes pathologized and analogous to all other acts that call for criminalization? b) How exactly do we protect 'the rights and freedom of others'? c) What kind of equality are we demanding when the structures that protect 'the rights and freedoms of others' do so through the promotion and protection of heterosexist and heteronormative morals? And, most importantly, d) how privacy and privatization are construed as the alibis for an unethical standpoint?

Morality is a Private Matter and Alekos Modinos is Guilty as Charged

Bestiality, homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, and rape are all filed under 'Offences Against Morality' in our imported Criminal Code, the legacy of Victorian colonial legislation. This legal code largely reflects the social disposition of our nation. Furthermore, it opens up a huge, unaddressed gap in

our legal system regarding the distinction between morality and human rights and how these are exercised both in the private and the public sphere. Our penal system is entirely predicated upon outmoded notions of gender and family constructs from which we, non-heterosexual and non-normative others, should be extremely careful as to how we call for equality. In other words, we may thereby run the risk of replicating an 'equality' that oppresses all the parties involved. Somehow 'family' and its ally 'private life' become contested arenas that permit more violence with less retribution. Consider, as an especially telling illustration, how the family operates when it discovers that one of its members is a homosexual. They often *accept* their homosexual as long as the homosexual keeps their homosexuality in the family - a matter of privacy. This demand is not a benign request, nor does it show respect for privacy. It's a violation of a significant part of a human being's identity and it also impinges on the victim's immediate social circle who by proxy will have to make one of two decisions: keep their friend's sexuality a private matter (lie and become co-opted into the circle of privacy/family), or disclose their friend's sexuality (defend their individual integrity, politics and belief system

at the cost of risking a friendship and being excluded from the social circle). Such notions of love and loyalty remain within the parameters of a close-knit network, permeating our society on all levels starting with the legal system, precisely because they do not enter the public sphere. I will elaborate on the passages to follow.

Suppose we take the example of rape, which is another 'offence against morality'. *Section 145* states that 'any person who commits the offence of rape is liable to imprisonment for life.' However, if you rape a family member this is defined as a different type of offence which goes by the name incest and only gets you seven years. *Section 146* declares:

Any male person who has carnal knowledge of a female person, *irrespective of whether with the consent or not* of such female person, who is to his knowledge his granddaughter, daughter, sister or mother - shall be guilty of the offence of *incest* and shall be liable to *imprisonment for 7 years*. (italics mine)

Framing rape as incest, because it is enacted within the private (family) sphere is not the same as saying that CONSENT is the HUMAN RIGHT to say YES or

NO to sexual advances, be it by family members or strangers. *Section 146* should be amended to read:

Any male person who has carnal knowledge of another female person, *irrespective of whether with the[ir] consent or not* of such female person, who is to his their knowledge his a grand daughter child, daughter, sister or mother [child, sibling or parent] - shall be guilty of the offence of *incest* and shall be liable to *imprisonment for 7 years*.



Section 146 without consent is rape. With consent we may call it incest. And a footnote here, not all rapists are biologically male. So let's question the framework of morality without promoting 'family life', 'privacy' or gender stereotyping.

How did we ever come to accept that raping a family member is less immoral than raping a stranger? And what would happen to the victim and the perpetrator if such a crime remained within the family? The rapist would not be convicted, and the victim would continue to suffer psychological abuse through having to face, live and engage with a family member who had raped them. Let's transpose this argument to homosexuality

in order to address how we came to accept that sexuality is a private matter. What happens to a homosexual when a family requests that they remain closeted? The family will not be reprimanded for closeting their homosexual and the homosexual will continue to suffer psychological abuse by dint of leading a semi-public and contradictory life. If we insist that criminal acts such as rape be exposed in order for rapists to be convicted why is it that the families that closet their family member's homosexuality are off the hook? Homosexuality is not a criminal offence, it's a human right. But discrimination or closeting on the premise of protecting 'family life' and 'privacy' is, simply put, discrimination. And such acts of so-called acceptance of diversity, as long as that diversity follows restrictive conditions, should have legal consequences - be it for your family or, indeed, for anyone else.

So, our legal system and our loving, loyal society are deeply problematic. Furthermore, the case of *Modinos v Cyprus* exposes the general situation of a number of social frameworks particular to the Cypriot context. The state and our ostensibly democratic society work quite much the same manner. Which means that our 'private' affairs (homophobia, partner

violence, sexism, poverty, racism, trafficking, mental health, addiction, money laundering, gambling, ecological destruction) in the big democratic 'family closet' cannot be challenged on the basis of *Article 8* as they don't threaten national security, health, and so on, remaining as they are within the doors of a closed (governmental, institutional, familial, and so on) network. The idea is: whatever you do in private is your own business even if it may be the most unethical conduct. Furthermore, as long as no one finds out, a number of officials will support such conduct or assist in concealing it in order to conceal their own complicity. The same approach was taken towards Mr. Modinos when he submitted that he experiences 'fear and agony,' to the 'great strain, apprehension and fear of prosecution' he had suffered, and to the 'perils to his right of respect for his private life.' Judge Pikiş revealed exactly what is wrong with our legal system when he, almost logically, continued to insist that Modinos had no reason to appeal on the basis of *Article 8* as:

the applicant was never harassed in his private personal affairs and that he has been able to propagate the causes of the Liberation Movement of

Homosexuals in Cyprus of which he is the President, without let or hindrance, are in themselves suggestive of the absence of a valid basis for his perceived fear of a likelihood of breach of his rights under *Article 8* of the Convention.

Our own Modinos was thus functioning against our legal system with the consent of the officials who simply didn't care (or were really into) what he got up to in private. Until Modinos became (reasonably) paranoid about the fact that he was running a 'liberation movement' that was constitutionally breaking the law *in public*. In other words, our legal system reflects the often-unconscious mechanisms of our social reasoning:

1. What you do in private is your own business (gay sex)
2. You can make a business out of it 'without let or hindrance' as long as everyone is happy to do dirty business with you (Liberation Movement of Homosexuals in Cyprus)
3. If you're going to be doing dirty business, keep it in the closet, and get everyone into the closet with you.

And you can take that analogy and apply it to

each and every other system spiralling out of control: brothels, trafficking, gambling, the smoking ban and so on and so on... democracy!

We Are All Guilty

It's what spills and leaks from the private into the public that slips into a position where it may be addressed, policed, challenged and transformed. And this push from the inside out should not be to the advantage of a conflated morality premised on family life or private life. Why do we press for 'Same Love - Equal Rights' if those rights are in favour of a model that disregards what we are actually calling for: the expression of diverse sexualities, not love, in public!

While we insist on transparency when seeking to expose the corruption infiltrating every aspect of our lives in both the public and private sector (the state, the police, healthcare, education, jurisdiction, the military, tourism, agriculture, foreign investments) we need to recognize that we are all, to some extent, complicit in this corruption. Just like the family that accepts its homosexual in private, the people who fail to speak up about matters, that should

be in the public and not private sphere, are also implicitly corrupt and guilty by virtue of concealing these issues. How may we begin to challenge and transform society when we are still stuck in a checkmate of protecting our family and friend's privacy by closeting and/or perpetuating corruption?

Let's not forget, on such a small island, almost everyone is family or friend.

I am not drawing parallels between state corruption and homosexuality in order to suggest that these two different dimensions are social or political 'issues' that ought to be dealt with in similar ways. Quite the contrary. These juxtapositions of culture, sexuality, corruption, crisis are different matters that nevertheless derive from something that I firmly believe has a single root. The underlying mechanism that binds all these problems together is a systematic push towards a heteronormativity which is typically intelligible, predisposed to control and promote a morality based on privacy when these should all be public affairs. I am suggesting that all these 'issues' are already being treated in similar ways, even by the LGBT community, despite the fact that they are different problems. I had hoped that our

community would highlight those very differences instead of taking refuge in the safety of privacy, heteronormativity and the family unit. This begs the question, if homosexuality is legal, with minimal recorded instances of discrimination, where does this unjustified fear stem from and what exactly will this sort of protection/closeting establish in the long run? When and how did this propensity towards privacy become so compelling on an island famous for its openness and hospitality?

This article arose from a wish to address these baffling contradictions. Let me reiterate, however, that pursuing matters through legislation that frames human rights as an impingement on privacy will inevitably lead to all sorts of rights being pursued and/or protected in the very same manner. Consider the ninety-eight containers of explosives that were stored (in private) for two and a half years in the sun at the naval base in Mari without the consent of the public or any Government Control Authority (because we don't have any such authority). Yet this was public knowledge, and no one spoke up or even seemed to mind. Until the explosives blew up and then everyone had an opinion. That's what privacy gets away with. And that's why we need to insist on visibility and

transparency in all areas, starting from our individual selves - even if we thereby run the risk of having the outside invade the inside. And, I will dare say it, even if such transparency runs the risk of exposing our own family and friends.

In the dire situation that this nation finds itself in, it might be far more generous to actually invite the outside into our personal sphere. Especially when we lack even the basic structures that would permit us to hold our government and society to account. We have almost no authorities in place to ensure that the ethics of our public or private services are following reasonable protocols, while the few that are in place manoeuvre through corruption. For an island that is now succumbing to the promise of wealth guaranteed by privatization - because the public services are corrupt - can someone tell me who precisely is going to guarantee that the private sector will not further corrupt the resources that we are already abusing? Apparently, privatization will ensure that more control will come into effect in order to meet ethical business standards. This is a result of 55% of all companies in Cyprus claiming that corruption had prevented them from being awarded contracts by public authorities. The

Coordinating Body Against Corruption, established in 2003, never developed a mandate for an anti-corruption strategy. In fact, it doesn't even have any full-time staff. Yet we know that the private sector will need regulation from a public body. But how can we insist that privatization will be better regulated when there is no robust authority in place to regulate it? Simply said, if public authorities are corrupt, then the private sector will inevitably be corrupted by the very authorities that seek to regulate it.

This dysfunctional structure paradoxically ensures that everything continues to function in the same way. Entertainment venues and leisure services rely on the exploitation of migrant workers in order to cater to our blue blood Greek Cypriot citizens. As a result, we push the migrants outside our working tax system and then complain that migrants are exploiting our (corrupt) national benefits. Our public health system is notorious for being a closed system, where access to appointments depends on the size of your pocket or your family connections and not on the urgency of your health needs. The solution: privatize healthcare. Our homosexuality has now become the mascot that will earn us a pat on the back from the EU because on the

surface the Pride Festival ticks the boxes of diversity, equality and democracy. In reality we have very poor reasons to justify the progress that such an event creates when there are no structures in place to sustain the well-being of minorities. The solution? Privatize homosexuality. That is, either co-opt it into heterosexual culture or closet it.

Our enchanting seafronts have become overwhelmingly privatized and it may only be a matter of time before the owners of these marvels restrict access to citizens. The solution is to allow citizens to buy their time on 'private' beaches by renting umbrellas and sunbeds. Our geographical luck attracts sun-starved tourists to enjoy our abundant and fresh produce even at the cost of destroying our ecosystem through poaching, unregulated fishing and destructive harvesting. Furthermore, you will never see images of our spectacular coral reefs juxtaposed with images of multi-million-pound illegal hotels built on the graves of our conservation areas. Just as you will never see any homosexual expression on the *one day* that we were permitted to display it during the Pride Festival. Because, on the visible level, the situation reflects the CTO's genteel campaign: Love Cyprus!

With a financial crisis that shook and almost sank the island, we still do not have any homeless people, and as destitute and corrupt as state welfare may be, the people of the island will ensure that no one, of any race or sexuality, goes without food or shelter. That's an incredible statistic for a population nearing a million citizens. Of course, there has been no research based upon a representative demographic sample, which would also include the 21% of migrants and their income level. But, even if there were no life-threatening poverty, I would argue that this is not a communal act of love. Perhaps this is the ultimate communion of National (Family) Pride. Where such acts of compassion or empathy - and you should feel free here to insert all the humanitarian vocabulary you choose - are not truly acts of responsible citizenship or communal solidarity.

They are acts of violence that mask our **internalized shame.** Because, where there are no visible casualties, there is **no war.**

While the international press is astounded that our cafés and bars are bustling despite our financial

crisis, we all sit here and wonder why we have become the butt of Slavoj Zizek's insipid jokes: 'The Cyprus crisis is not a storm in the teacup of a small marginal country, it is a symptom of what is wrong with the entire EU system.' It is the European Union that we aspire to for our queer (and every other) politics. For this reason, we thought Pride would be an emancipatory step. Yet, we are too proud to admit to our failures, whether on a personal or a collective level, in case we expose our financial or queer deficiencies, or, even worse, our affluence. We will remain somewhere in the middle until it all passes over, which means until it all gets worse again. We are so proud that we are borderline arrogant when it comes to our slow tempo, quick-fix, short-term vision, laissez-faire temperament and our laid-back attitude that will soon lay us all in a coma.

Our latest financial crisis was an all too accurate depiction of our overall crisis. And (the lack of) our queer politics has led us to make the same unconsidered leap into the liberating arms of the EU. We are demanding that the government passes the bill for same-sex civil partnerships within a year. As European Parliament Building for Cyprus acting head Alexandra Attalides stated, 'A country cannot be European unless there

are equal rights for all. Today we are proud'. We are bursting with pride in order to blanket our internal homophobia and all that is actually far worse in our non-heterosexual lives than the mere fact that we cannot walk down the aisle.

We managed to amass over 4,500 people during that march but the only role models that we saw fit to represent us (or who stepped forward on their own account) were a female pop singer of an ambiguous sexuality and our own personal Harvey Milk: a then 81 year old Alekos Modinos. Did anyone see any same-sex couples waving their veils and wedding rings at each other? Did anyone see any same-sex couples? Did anyone see any gay people expressing their gayness? Especially at the Municipal Gardens where the march burst into a LOVE parade instead of a GAY Parade. The most well-known area for cruising for gay sex was never as desexualized as it was on that evening. On our only day to be visible, we further closeted our sexual selves in public, out of respect for our straight supporters who have only got as far as accepting that we exist. Homosexuality has been decriminalized for 16 years now, but this means very little in our dirty democratic social closet.

Towards the Visible

There were many more people on that day worthy of our attention. A few of them were given the stage but our media for its part paid them little or no attention. Filiz Bilen of the Turkish Cypriot NGO *Queer Cyprus Association* delivered a moving speech which concluded with the rallying cry of 'No Borders!'. Thus disrupting our feel-good day with the realization that underlying our finally (in)visible sexuality sits the repressed trauma of a divided island. This trauma has been communally absorbed into an individual level that reproduces itself in the form of divisive thinking: us-them / public-private / north-south / male-female / hetero-homo / lgbt/queer-non-binary. We also had as role models the cool representatives of the Austrian embassy sporting beards in honour of their recent Eurovision success Conchita. Meanwhile, we had our own Conchita on stage, a drag artist with stubble who goes by the name A Man To Pet. But our artist was denied any media coverage. Unlike Conchita, A Man To Pet is not the type of 'clean' act you get on Eurovision: an ultra-feminine, sexy human with an angelic voice and a beard. The problem in that sentence is beard. The problem with A Man To Pet is sexuality. And what

shames us is that A Man To Pet opened his act by

saying ***'You can call me***

faggot, homo, Jesbo,

anything you like. But I live my life freely and I do anything I want'.

Another jab at our social fabric in the full light of day: that hate speech exists and that some of us still have the courage to express our sexuality in public spaces where we have no legal protection. That is the pressing issue. Not same-sex partnership.

I want my friends who didn't make it that year to show up at the next Pride without the fear that men in black cloaks will stab them with crucifixes. I want them to show up knowing that if they are assaulted, the men in cloaks will be prosecuted, not just restrained. **I don't want to see my friends' hearts pounding on national television when they are being called 'unnatural', 'diseased' and so on without any intervention on the part of the TV host.** I don't want my friends to get fired or hired because of how they express their sexuality or gender. I don't want my role models to be a bunch of straight politicians who use my sexuality, without understanding it, to

promote their individual political interests within the EU. My friends, with all their flaws and qualities, are the real-life role models I have had in my life. And some of them weren't there because if the bill were to pass tomorrow, there would be nothing to protect them from discrimination between the space of their 'private life' and the town hall, work or education. I want legislation to protect my human right to express my sexual desire (not love) for another human being. I want a diversity and fluidity of sexual identities to enrich my life with a variety of sexual knowledge. I want role models who have had (lots of) sex and can tell me about that sex in a way that does not objectify people. I want role models who have battled and are still battling against their internal and external homophobia to have free access to psychological support. I want the parents of my role models to have free access to workshops that deal with the complexities of gender and sexuality. I want NGOs like the Family Planning Association to provide LGBTQIA people with possibilities and paths for child adoption and care, before the bill gets passed! I want the LGBT Greek Cypriot association to change its name from Accept to Respect for LGBTQIA-to-Z. I want the Mediterranean Institute of

Gender Studies to research genders and not just white, middle class, heterosexual women's issues. I want candidates applying for public service positions to take exams that consist of questions regarding their ability to deal with all minorities. I want the existing officers to take those exams now! I want academics to be able to file a complaint to a disciplinary committee next time someone thinks 'faggot' is a funny word to use at a conference. I want every school to provide a sex education that includes diverse sexualities and genders. And as for the government, I want the government to fund all of the above. If I am going to be governed, then in this case, I want to be loved. Which means, I want to be respected and understood, in public dammit.

I am pleading for an equality that demands the visibility of the sexual homosexual in public. Sexuality is not a private matter. Sex is not a private matter. Government is not a private matter. We are all the result of someone having had sex, not necessarily love. And we all have to live in public within the parameters set by our democracy and our legal system. As Dr. Zelia Gregoriou passionately conveyed at the panel discussion on 'The Need for Gay Prides' which took place at EU House three days in advance of Pride, 'it's not about sexual orientation! [...] it's about sexual expression.' What we do in 'private' has been going on in private for centuries. What we do in public is what matters now. I want the right to the freedom to express my sexuality and gender in public!

This is the basis upon which I marched on that Saturday. To be, to embody, to experience and express my sexual self with one or more persons of any gender in public. For the right to practice sexual love for all sexualities, freely, in private and in public with legal parameters that can protect ME from hate speech and discrimination. **For the human right to flirt, to kiss, to touch, smile and fuck until the Cypriot sun shines out of my queer-feminist ass.**

African DNA

Charitini Kyriakou

Translated by Marilena Zackheos

Your african dna now dances naked around
the fire.

The beach is figurative.

Your lips are huge - up and down - they kiss
my wet clitoris.

The lines of your hands, the african lines
on your fingers, enter me deep,
they swirl.

At last, your large erect clitoris

- like a small penis - leaps with might and nails
mine.

Flap!

I open my eyes.

I sit sweat-drenched in the armchair and it is
late,

much too late whichever way you look at it.

Charitini Kyriakou was born in 1979 in Nicosia. She studied music technology in Athens. She is a visual artist, poet, and songwriter. She has presented her artworks in five individual exhibitions, as well as in group exhibitions. She has published discs of her own songs and two poetry collections. She lives and falls in love in Strovolos. You can find more information about Charitini Kyriakou here www.charitini.com

Αφρικάνικο Ντι Εν'Εη

Τώρα το αφρικάνικο ντι εν'εη σου χορεύει γυμνό γύρω
από τη φωτιά.

Η παραλία είναι εικονική.
Τα χείλια σου τεράστια - πάνω και κάτω - φιλούν την
υγρή μου κλειτορίδα.

Οι γραμμές των χεριών σου, οι αφρικανικές γραμμές
στα δάχτυλά σου, εισχωρούν βαθιά μέσα μου,
στριφογυρίζουν.

Τέλος, η μεγάλη καυλωμένη κλειτορίδα σου
- σαν μικρό πίοσ - πετάγεται με φόρα και καρφώνει τη
δική μου.

Φλαπ!

Ανοίγω τα μάτια.
Κάθομαι ιδρωμένη στην πολυθρόνα και είναι αργά,
αργά απ' όπου κι αν το δεις.



Firari Bedenler/Fugitive Bodies Exhibition,

November 2018

Hüseyin Özinal is an artist and LGBTQ+ activist born in Binatlı/Limassol in 1961. After the 1974 war, Hüseyin migrated to Güzelyurt/Morphou, completed a BA in Painting at Istanbul Marmara University, and then returned to Cyprus in 2004. Hüseyin's earlier exhibitions, which include *Abstract Portraits* (1991), *Abstract Collage* (1998), *Abstracts Untitled 1 and Untitled 2* (2001-2005), *Earthly Visions* (2010) and *Journey to the End of Life* (2011), focused on colours of the ocean, fluid forms and the shores. The images below are drawn from the most recent exhibition, *Firari Bedenler/Fugitive Bodies* (2018), which focuses on states and policies of the body and the incompleteness, unwillingness, and resistance of the body to be in 'ideal body form'.
<http://huseyinozinal.com>







GENOCIDE

Constantinos Papageorgiou

Translated by Constantinos Papageorgiou, Stalo Hadjipieri.

There was definitely something wrong;
ever since he could remember himself
he couldn't wear his gender.

A piece of skin hanging
for so many years
a piece of skin he never wanted
and yet impossible to take off
20 years x 365 days x 24 hours!

He tried a few times to cut it off
without success;
only left with a few cuts as a reminder.

His family contributed
to the genocide of the transgender population.
"We gave birth to a son, not a daughter,
for God's sake!"

It's been so long
he has already gotten used
to the infanticide.

Anyway, let's not think
about all these today.

She smiles.
"It's about ti-me", I said
with a shaking voice.

"Are you ready to go in?
Finally, the moment of your Gendercide
has arrived".

UNSPOKEN



STUDY ON HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA
IN THE NORTHERN PART OF CYPRUS
POPULATION STUDY

"MOMENT OF YOUR GendERCide"

Constantinos Papageorgiou has published two poetry collections: *Supernova* (Melani, 2017) shortlisted for the National Poetry Prize, and *The Five Seasons* (Melani, 2012) shortlisted for the Newcomer Poet Award by the Hellenic Authors' Society. In 2020 he was awarded by the Cyprus Writers' Union as the Best Young Poet for his anecdotal collection *The cart-postals I didn't send*. He represented Cyprus at the European Championship Poetry Slam (Budapest, 2018) after qualifying in the 2nd International Poetry Slam Cyprus.

Valentini Stavrou holds a BA in European Studies (Reading University) and an MA in Comparative Literature (European University Cyprus). Her prose and poetry have appeared in *Cadences* and *Ideogramma's First Step*. She has also collaborated with the *Politis* newspaper for the Alice in Wonderland CY project, featured in the Parathyro section. She has also featured in local free press newspapers and her poem *on turning thirty* was translated into French for the anthology *Les femmes (se) racontent: Expériences dans les PECO*, edited by Simona Necula (Bucharest, 2017).



A whore named George

She had the look of someone who was done with life; as if life as a whore was plain. She had tasted the fluids of many men, heard the names of many women as they came. No one had called out hers.

"I'm not tired. I don't feel sorry for myself. I would have killed myself by now if I did. I'm a man who wears make-up and skirts and high-heels, I had to sell my ass to pay rent. Would I have done it differently? I don't know. At 17, I only wanted to be free. I didn't feel free as George, I didn't feel free at home. I was nothing more than a naïve little boy who thought that people wouldn't mind that I had a penis behind my skirt. I feel lucky though, I'm still alive at 53. None of my friends made it. Some took their own lives, others overdosed, others threw away their skirts and killed

themselves while pretending to be happy. Was I ever happy? I've had my moments. I even fell in love. Four times. Four times I believed I had found the one who would have saved me from this life; that was before I turned thirty. I didn't work on the night of my 30th birthday. I blew out three candles; one for each decade I had endured. I blew out another one before I slept; it was a sort-of goodbye to my lovers. And that was it. No more love for me. Do I love someone? I loved everyone who was ever important in my life. And my parents, I love them even though they are gone. I used to go by my house in the early hours of the morning, after work. I still had my key and sometimes when I was hungry I would sneak in and have a taste of my mum's food. Six years after I left home I discovered my sister had given birth to a little girl; I saw

the picture in the frame. There were still pictures of me in the house but the one I took a few weeks before leaving home had a candle next to it. Every time I went in, the candle was lit. I think my mum knew it was me who sneaked in, she would have changed the locks otherwise. She would still cook my favorite dish every Saturday. I mostly sneaked in on Saturdays, not only because of the chicken though; men went holy on

Saturdays; they'd go to church on Sundays. I sometimes went to church too, I wanted to see my parents, I wished they would see me so they could see I wasn't dead. Maybe they did think I was dead, I don't know. They never saw me, but I saw them a few times. I can't blame them for not accepting me. God had given them a son and they loved me so much. They had dreams and expectations; a wife and a career and kids and grandchildren and family Sundays. At least my sister



fulfilled their dream. You know, I didn't even know that my father had died. I sneaked in on a Saturday and there was no chicken. I thought my mum was ill so I sneaked back in the following Saturday and there was no chicken. But there was another frame and another candle, and my father was smiling through it and I smiled back and I said "I love you". I knew my mum would soon follow. My dad was her everything. I bought a newspaper and I flicked through it till I saw my dad smiling

again; the pain was unbearable; I had been selling myself for years and I had endured abuse beyond your imagination; but my parents' death was the most horrible pain I ever had to go through. Sometimes I even wish I will die soon so I'll get to see them again. And we'll all be in paradise, screw God, I deserve to be in paradise. And when they see me there, they'll know that it's OK to love me when I'm wearing skirts."

Mine started singing on stage at 15, contributed to two recorded albums, wrote own songs and performed in bi-communal peace concerts in Cyprus. Mine is one of the first LGBTQ+ female singers in the north, and has performed in various projects in Brighton, sometimes singing songs from Cyprus. In 2019, Mine performed at the Woman Acoustic stage in Brighton Pride and is working on new projects.

Mine Gündüz. Born in Cyprus in 82, Mine left for the UK in 2004. Growing up queer within a musical family, Mine found music an appropriate medium to express herself. *Gemiler* (Ships) written by Orhan Atasoy with music by Ercüment Vural which is a Turkish song released in 1993. The video for this song was the first to include LGBTQIA+ themes. Mine will sing this song as part of the launch.

Bir an için çıksam
hayatımdan
Yanık tenli omuzunda
Haykırsam maziden,
uzaklardan
Şu anda yanında
Deniz rüzgara karışmış güneşte
Martı sesleri vardı, gülüşlerde
Gülüşlerde
Gülüşlerde
Sen geçerken sahilden sessizce
Gemiler kalkar yüreğimden
gizlice
Sen geçerken sahilden sessizce
Gemiler kalkar yüreğimden
gizlice
Bir an için çıksam hayatımdan
Yanık tenli omuzunda
Haykırsam maziden, uzaklardan
Şu anda yanında
Deniz rüzgara karışmış güneşte
Dalga sesleri vardı, gülüşlerde
Gülüşlerde
Gülüşlerde
Sen geçerken sahilden sessizce
Gemiler kalkar yüreğimden
gizlice
Sen geçerken sahilden sessizce
Gemiler kalkar yüreğimden
gizlice
Sen geçerken sahilden sessizce
Gemiler kalkar yüreğimden
gizlice
If I come out of my life for a
moment

On their tanned shoulder
If I scream from the past, from
far away
Now beside them
The sea mixes with the wind in
the sun
There were seagull voices in
the laughter
In smiles
In smiles
As you pass by the beach in
silence
Ships sail from my heart
secretly
As you pass by the beach in
silence
Ships sail from my heart
secretly
If I come out of my life for a
moment
On their tanned shoulder
If I scream from the past, from
far away
Now beside them
The sea mixing with the wind in
the sun
There were sounds of waves in
laughter
In smiles
In smiles
As you pass by the beach in
silence
Ships sail from my heart
secretly
As you pass by the beach in
silence
Ships sail from my heart
secretly
As you pass by the beach in
silence
Ships sail from my heart
secretly



"PASS BY In Silence"



Once upon a time
 In a small, conservative society
 Where all families are woven together
 intricately
 & where privacy is not of the utmost
 importance;
 I committed the biggest crime of our
 time. Oblivious to consequence:
 I fell in love with someone
 I wasn't

"SUPPOSED TO BE"

in love with.

Evvel zaman içinde,
 The culture I longed to wear as a crown
 Put its iron fist around my neck
 & held me down;
 It trapped my hopes and dreams
 When I sought change.
 It taught me how to cry tears in
 streams
 & told me I was strange-
 It tried to shape me and break me
 At the same time, relentlessly.

**Once upon a time,
 I dared to run with my forbidden love,
 Run from judgement-
 But when I looked up above
 It took only a moment
 For the sky to shatter down
 & break my mind apart**

Μία φορά κι έναν καιρό,
 I picked up my pen
 & learnt a very important
 lesson:
 & even harder to find again
 It's a fight to keep -
 A battle under oppression.

Once upon a time,
 I discovered poetry
 It made sense of the tangled mess
 of my mind & heart -
 A form of self-therapy;
 It made me feel less
 Alone, less fallen apart
 So that I could walk further,
 Talk louder,
 Proving my
 existence

Proving that I'll keep
 fighting
 Every single day
 To love
 To grow words and words of love
 Like a weed that resists all plucking -
 Proving that **my sentences will always end
 In an**

until your rules, dear society, finally bend...

**"In our society, there
 are unwritten rules
 about who we should
 fall in love with and
 who we should stay
 away from. It could
 be a Turkish
 speaking Cypriot
 falling in love with a
 Greek speaking
 Cypriot, or a person
 falling in love with
 someone who shares
 the same gender.
 Some love is
 "forbidden". This
 poem is about the
 struggles of standing
 up for yourself, for
 the sake of love." -
 @lemanpoetry**

LOVE IS HARD TO FIND

Leman is a bisexual Cypriot. For 4 years,
 poetry has been her secret fight for the
 right to love. It's a world of safety where
 she allows myself to feel and express
 my emotions, without control and
 without fear. She loves her Cypriot
 community, and writing because it
 breaks her just as much as it shapes her.
 She writes about love, loss, heartbreak,
 difficulties of the mind. Leman hopes
 that one day she can write about a
 united, loving Cyprus too.

AS A YOUNG CYPRIOT LOVER


"&"

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LEMAN



My wife went to war.
A sword in her left hand.
Blood dripping from the ceilings.
She said she will be coming back.
Letters never reaching me.
Lost in the signs of her presence,
I searched for her in the local museums,
on the pages of history books,
Greek mythology, newspapers,
magazines.

She was a hero.

Resurrecting the images
of our common memories.
She left and went to war
I sit on my couch.
I lay on my bed. Waiting.
A myth I created of you
when you closed that door,
with a suitcase in your right hand.

A spectre of the past.
Do you even exist anymore?

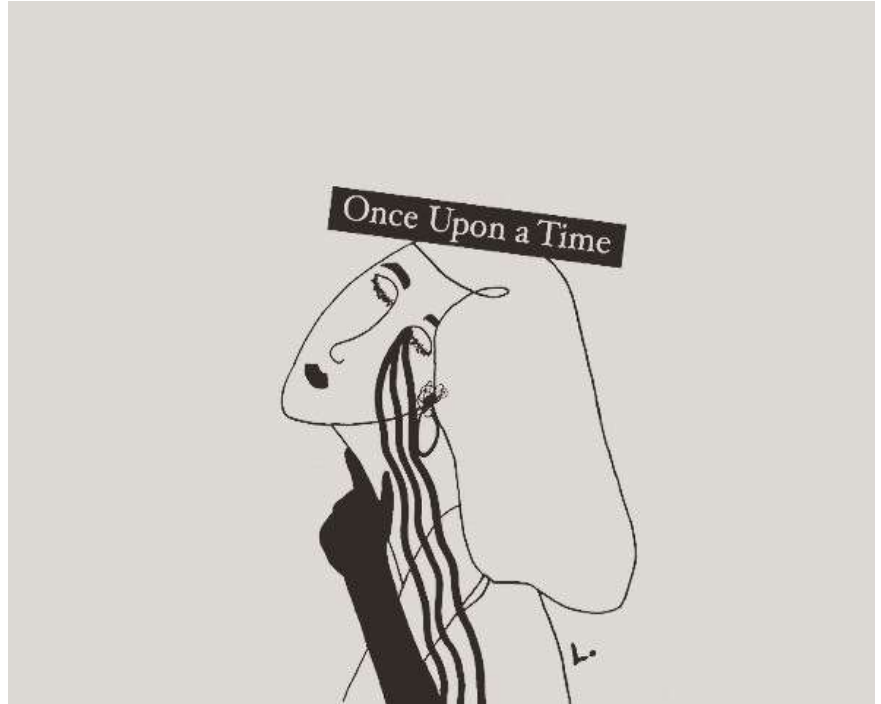
My wife went to war



Anastasia Dolitsay

◀ **Anastasia Dolitsay** was born in Russia but spent most of her life living in Cyprus. Anastasia is an artist who primarily works with sound design, music composition and digital image; she is active within the Cypriot queer community through different events, protests and artwork. Her artwork makes use of queer social, cultural and political affairs of modern-day partitioned Cyprus with specific focus on duality and displacement, so as to translate it into and understand her own personal experience, culture and philosophy.

Leman is a bisexual Cypriot. For 4 years, poetry has been her secret fight for the right to love. It's a world of safety where she allows myself to feel and express my emotions, without control and without fear. She loves her Cypriot community, and writing because it breaks her just as much as it shapes her. She writes about love, loss, heartbreak; difficulties of the mind. Leman hopes that one day she can write about a united, loving Cyprus too. Leman @lemanpoetry



Poem/image: Leman @lemanpoetry | Greek translation, Sophia Irene Kaniklidou @sophia_does_stuff | Arianna Koudounas Peaceful Poetry of Cyprus, peacefulpoetryofcyprus@gmail.com



Romance Across the Divide

We need space

In memory of Zak Kostopoulos/Zackieoh! and all victims of fascist murders

We need space
We need space to breathe
We need space to exist, without being constantly policed by normative gaze
We need space to exist, without fear of violence, without fear, that one of us might be killed
We need space to resist and destroy colonizing systems, which have been colonizing our bodies. since birth
We need space to explore our fucking slutty desires shamelessly, beyond state regulations and non-sense papers
We need space to explore and question our queerness, our genders and sexualities
We need space to explore our masculinities and femininities and all in between
We need space for all bodies to dance freely as if there is no tomorrow
We need space to mourn
to heal our wounds
We need space to talk about our life and death drives
We need space to create our own eco-communities of humans and non humans
We need space for our own families of all kinds
We need space to embrace our failures and our vulnerabilities
We need space to embrace our kind of pride and shame, beyond rainbow capitalism
We need space to express our traumas and pain
We need space to share our queer-stories of violence
We need space to be alone and altogether
To be loud and silent
To cry and laugh
Naked or in drag
In shiny glitter or in black
At home or in a cruising spot
We need space to unlearn and re-learn
We need space to decolonize our bodies from our oppressive binary past
We need space to breathe and heal
To exist and resist as outcasts, misfits, weirdos, queers
To connect through our anti-nationalist margins as queens, kings or freaks
and step into our queertopian future

*Written for the queer international open mic night of Queer Ink. (Athens, June 2019).

Despina Michaelidou was born in Limassol. They are a postgraduate student of Gender Studies at the University of Cyprus, and has a BA in Sociology from the University of Aegean, Lesbos. Their interests include genders, sexualities, desires and bodies through intersectional, artistic, feminist, anarchist, antimilitarist and queer collective initiatives and performances.

Despina Michaelidou

My name is Queer

weird ...

subversive ... abnormal ...?

I cross sides, divisions and the order of things

If I were a colour I could be black maybe white...

or all the colours of the rainbow, shining glittery...

Who am I? Who are you? Who are we? Who is the Other?

In between death and life

I am here waiting for you

You are here waiting for me

Can you see me? Touch me?

Can you feel me? Smell me?

I am not a woman and neither are you a man

You are not a woman and I am not a man

I don't even know if we are human

Here we are

~~The Other and the I~~ the I and the Other

We look into the mirror

You think you recognize me I think I recognize you

I can see you and touch you

I can feel you. Or do I ...?

We, the thousand pieces of a broken and colonized mirror

Borders and binaries of you and me the Other and the I

Imprisoned segments of trapped identities bodies masks norms ...

Does it matter if we are young old thin fat able-bodied ... or not

What if we are gay bi lesbian straight transgender cisgender

single with or without children (a)sexual polyamorous monogamous

How about nationalism? Are we patriots?

capitalists socialists anarchists?

We are questioning patriarchy feminism right and left

our truths lies freedoms occupations friends enemies

Our name is queer

We are nothing and everything; traitors to the nation

Where is home?

Lefkoşa Λευκωσία Nicosia

Home reconnects the I and the Other

Scents of jasmine cinnamon lemon blossoms and songs of violin

Loud pithkiavli

Feeling my way through transcendental bodies and senses

I look again into the mirror

I am sorry I say to the I and the Other for the scars of the past

I run naked towards the unknown unapologetic

I feel broken fixed fearless hopeless

I attempt to recreate our shared times places truths lies

My name is queer

Mourning without tears

for herstory

But what about our... future?

**First published in Nicosia Beyond Barriers: Voices from a Divided City*

Despina Michaelidou

THE HUNT

CAST ALİ DÜŞENKALKAR - ERDOĞAN KAVAZ - ELMAZİYE DERVİŞ - ANDREAS ORPHANIDES
YAŞAR AYDIN KARACA - BARIŞ REFİKOĞLU - HARISSON

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY STEPHAN METZNER **SOUND BY** CHRISTOS KYRIACOULLIS

GAFFER KYRIAKOS POLITIS **ORIGINAL MUSIC BY** İNAL BİLSEL **EDITING BY**

MUSTAFA KÖROĞLU & KAMIL SALDUN **COLOR GRADING BY** PANICDS PETRIDES

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PETER STEPHANOY **PRODUCTION DESIGNER** ANDREAS ANTONIOU

ART DIRECTOR MARIOS NEOCLEGUS **COSTUME** CATERINA TAKKA

HAIR & MAKE UP HELLEN VAVANOY **PRODUCED BY** MARIOS PETRONIDAS & SHOLEH ZAHRAEI

& KAMIL SALDUN **CO-PRODUCED BY** CULTURAL SERVICES OF THE CYPRUS MINISTRY OF

EDUCATION AND CULTURE - ACCEPT LGBTI CYPRUS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY SHOLEH ZAHRAEI & KAMIL SALDUN



SHOLEH ZAHRAEI & KAMIL SALDUN

THE HUNT

The sudden discovery of his son's secret turns Ibrahim's traditional world upside down. Fraught with emotional conflict, he takes his son Ismail on a fateful trip. The Hunt is based on true-life events and inspired by the biblical story of Prophet Abraham, father of all patriarchs, and his son Ismail; it is set in present-day Cyprus, unraveling the conservative façade of the society. It is Cyprus' first fiction tackling homophobia and patriarchy, told from an intersectional, queer and feminist perspective. It is made-up of actors and crew from Cyprus' Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking communities on the divided island.



Production: It is co-produced with the Accept LGBTI Cyprus Association and the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture (Cinema advisory committee). **Awards:** *

Second Prize for Best Cypriot Short Film 2020 at 10th International Short Film Festival of Cyprus * Stelios Bi-Communal Award by the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation * Pitching forum winner, FEST

Trailers: <https://vimeo.com/382311490>, <https://vimeo.com/382311977>, <https://vimeo.com/382312124>

Sholeh Zahraei is a filmmaker, born in Tehran/Iran, who grew up in Berlin, and studied Digital Filmmaking in Amsterdam. Later she moved to Cyprus where she completed a BA in Radio, Television, Film and MA in Visual Arts & Communication Design. Sholeh has worked on film sets in Germany, Netherlands, Cuba, USA, Canada, UK, Turkey, Cyprus and Iran with renowned directors like Abbas Kiarostami, Jafar Panahi, Bahram Beyzaie, Derviş Zaim. Sholeh has participated in the Berlinale Talents 2016 as a writer and director.

Kamil Saldun is a filmmaker and film editor, a member of the Indigenous Turkish-speaking Cypriot community, born in Famagusta, Cyprus. He has a BA in History and a Masters in Education. Since 1999 he has been an actor, working with several theater groups in Cyprus and internationally. Since 2011, Sholeh and Kamil have co-written, co-directed and co-produced independent films. They also work on underwater photography and film. In 2016, Sholeh and Kamil were selected to participate in a filmmaking workshop with maestro Abbas Kiarostami in Cuba where they made a short film under his mentorship. In 2018 they were selected by the curator Nicolas Vamvouklis to be part of Imago Mundi, the art collection of works commissioned and collected by Luciano Benetton on his travels around the world.



Stranger Danger

Save up money to escape,
daydreaming out the window
plane, what will suffer will
remain, just another blood
flow in novacaine,

There's an instinct, there's a
higher cause, body trembling
like a fish outside it's course,
just another collection of
muscles to obey, another
human in it's decay,

How I wish I was a child, a
normal confident young man,
now I'm running from what I
think I can't, call it what you
want, this ain't my only gay
charm,

Blue eyed friends at the club,
blood on their teeth but they
taste none,

The tongue adapts to what
the world offers as nutrition,
rape, fear and under-
recognition, there is talent in
sustaining this prison, this
hair, this despair, these
clothes, and these constant
'No's, I'm nothing but a
religion that's on fire, drown
the Bible and in Hell they'll
hire, someone different that's
not really that far away, you
chose distance over
understanding a child that
once knew how to play.

Don't take my 20's too, I beg

of you,

Don't make me shine light in
trauma you wouldn't like,
traces of places collecting
dust falling from a broken sky,

Danger danger, heard the
news again tonight, they
found a body and a broken
bike, stranger danger in the
night, they found a couple
beaten up and hanged outside
their only hope to survive, give
me back all these years of
panic attacks and self-harm,
how I lost weight when the
world sat there calm, give me
back all the loving that I
cannot give, I'm so cold you
could fuck me up into a drink,

Danger danger now
you're gay,

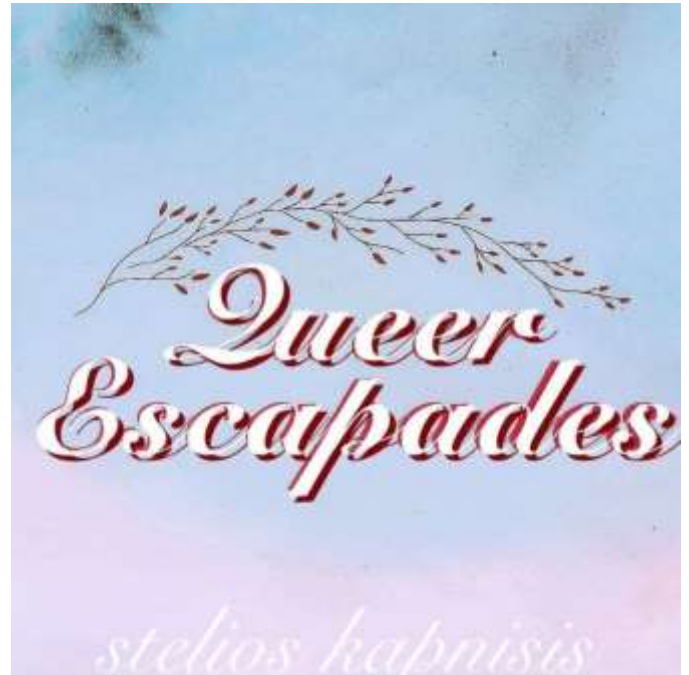
Stranger danger now you're
too much for their sake, they'll
call you names they'll spin you
round, they'll call you mean,
but you were just defending
your ground, you'll see a
rainbow flag and seek hope,
but deep down you know you
only got yourself to float, in
the deep Mediterranean dark
and blue, just like the skin
they hit, there's only blood
inside of you,
Oh there's only blood inside
of you

stelios kapnisis

Stelios Kapnisis was born in 1997 in Limassol, Cyprus. He started writing poetry at the age of 15 because he felt like it was the only medium of art that had the ability to convert his inner struggle into something much simpler and cognitively understandable. He pursued his studies in Biomedical Sciences in the University of West of England, in Bristol. He continues to write. From 2018 he started sharing his poems on his instagram page: @alepoudelispoetry

If my child, catches a cold of
depression, I'd let them know
this disease is not a passing
frenzy,
If my light, gets a glimpse of
darkness, maybe then I'd
allow the madness, take a
new drive in the highway of
Mediterranean sadness, and
make the windows fall off the
car, so the air could clean the
misery out of this ride

The queer escapades, more
than a lifetime that money
makes,
The shameless retrograde,
more like a teenager in
reverse,
Trace back my petals in the
porcelain vase,
First tears in the womb as I
show my face, to the blessed
cursed few,
Watching the light approach
not a day too soon, born into
hell every afternoon



Grow a beard or cut all hair,
Take up acting,
So you can finally perform
despair,
Fish out an accent, let it run
under cold water like an
open wound, one you're not
looking to close up soon,
Watch your partner
respirate, in your arms he'll
evaluate, what kind of
oxygen you really give,
'cause all you do is give, just
to watch them leave,
Though London's looking
pretty from seat 23A, we're
all coming back to the land
where escapism rises, and
my temper gets too hot to
touch I know, I might not
look happy, but I swear I'm
not

Kahve



*Picking up wild-grown
weeds from the cement
painted walls, you choke on
cinnamon and cardamom
rolls, oh you got a thing for
culture, but the bitch
despises you guilty, tilting
down the lights so your
shadow can dance around
freely,*

*But Kahve was my only
real name,
Boil me, make my bubbles
pop before you spell the
truth, enter me like I'm
swimming in your fountain
of youth, now I'm nothing
but a stimulation for you,
now I'm nothing but a
morning habit in bloom,
Manuka honey spread on
your body, stuck there 'till
the afternoon, stuck there*

*It gets depressing smelling
your pheromones and no
potential, you know
sometimes even mean people
get to feel special, and this
Cypriot sun doesn't seem to
change, and this Cypriot hate
doesn't seem rephrase, it
always feels like it's your
race, pour another fight to
make it all seem like we
mattered against the fog, the
kettle rises, in steam that I am
born, for Kahve was my real
name, and you became an
addict at your own game, a
threesome, me you and a
cigarette, don't you forget
who was there when you only
slept, who picked you up and
who will always stay the
same, stay the same flavour
for you, so you at least have
one familiar place you can
come back to*

STELIOS KAPNISIS

BOTTLENECK



*I would not think to touch the sky
with two arms. - Sappho*

Once again
the label reads, *Drink Me.*

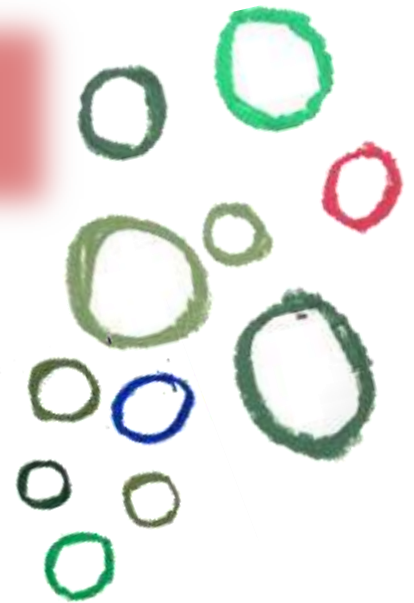
She is a rock
Ritalin-kids like to toss
into the sea:

much like sight-lovers
who bear to love a single thing
the same way twice,
I hold her up and say, *Maybe next time.*

I am the one of the prescription
of perceptible objects
damn horizon
too slim to separate air from water.

Loose lips
sink ships, dearie.
Dipsomaniac lips whisper,
There might not be another,

then what difference does it make
if we do or don't stop now?

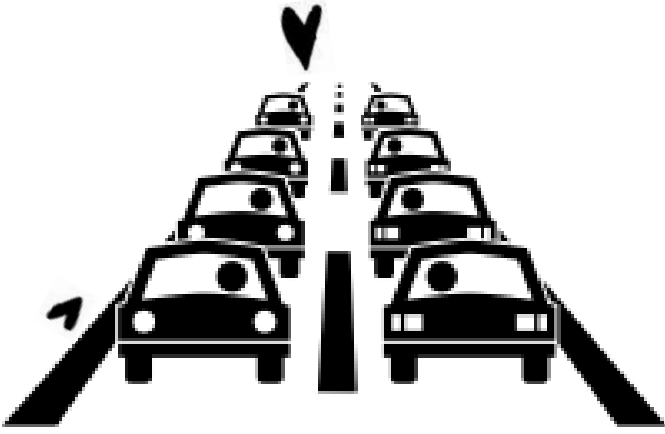


Marilena Zackheos grew up in Moscow, Beijing, Nicosia, Geneva and New York. She studied Philosophy, Creative Writing and English Literature in the USA and the UK, and holds a PhD from George Washington University, Washington D.C. She is director of the Cyprus Center for Intercultural Studies and Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Nicosia. She has published works on postcolonial literary and cultural studies, psychoanalysis and trauma, gender and sexuality. Her poetry collection *Carmines Lullabies* (A Bookworm Publication) was published in 2016.

Alice B. Toklas

on Her Way

By **Marilena
Zackheos**



7 March 1967

To Mr. Cuddlewuddle,
stuck in Paris traffic,
 taking oh so long,
but yes like my marinade you cannot rush,
now Husband accept devotion my love,

soon I'll tell you need be proud,
pen on page plays day by day, turned and turns,
moving again, towards the Père Lachaise,
Hubby-dearest to see you golden brown,

 when all those nights
ridiculous favors I asked of your imaginary face,
to hear you say, *wifey mine*,
I am all thine say it,

 and finally down the vault
wifey goes and though I know a poet's mouth,
it hardly opens,
if our last-tossed roses sealed yours,
 they make mine bleed the
 blackest,

oh Master most ceremonious, answer
"ladies and gentlemen, it is over"

dancing in the LESBIAN BAR

By Marilena
Zackheos



And here I am

and if my partner thinks she's a bad
dancer

she lacks the power to convince.

I see gracelessness
as pure grace indeed.

And up and down and all around
we jump and twirl,
not caring 'bout those rotten tongues

♥♥ or the damned beat.

The hair is messy,

the blouse is stained

but the lighting in this place makes
tanned skin shimmer.

Unharmonized. Bliss.

They must see we're lovers

pretending

all innocence,

treasured beauty

♥. died out.

The only ones on the dance floor,
alone like a bloody mess.

I stop;

grab our things, the skinny arm and leave

"Don't hold me any closer."

And the night is perfect, thick, the way ♥
it is.



Kaan Serin

Koraly Dimitriadis is the author of *Just Give Me The Pills* and *Love and F--k Poems* (which has also been translated into Greek). These poetic works form the basis of her theatre show *I say the wrong things all the time*. She also makes films of her poems. She is a freelance opinion writer who has been published widely across the Australian media, with international publications in *The Washington Post*. She was the recipient of the UNESCO City of Literature residency (Krakow) in 2019 for her debut fiction manuscript, *Divided Island*.



Red gypsy violinist

When I first heard your
gypsy band's music
I instantly fell in love
So I came to see you all
and there you were,

in your black corset tutu
I couldn't stop looking at you
Red ribbon flowing dark hair
seductress with that stare
you, with your red eye-makeup
your fishnets and soft, pale arms
who could possibly catch you?
or keep you in their arms?
fools that even try, fools
you tempt with your grin
seductress with those eyes
dancing them to delight
with your gypsy band
they can't help but stare
with your stage presence
commanding the attention
you rightfully deserve

Red gypsy violinist
what did you do to me?
solo you step off the stage
casually into the crowd
rest your chin to your violin
and they all watch, in awe
they want you to come to them

I wanted you to come to me
but who could catch you?
fools that even try, fools
you exist melodiously adrift
in the sorrowful lament
of your other half
You rest on its shoulder
and it cries for you
the tears you cannot
You live only for its sound
teasing with your smile
they all watched, in awe
but I cried for you
I cried for me
who could catch you?
you seductress, you
what did you do to me
red gypsy violinist?

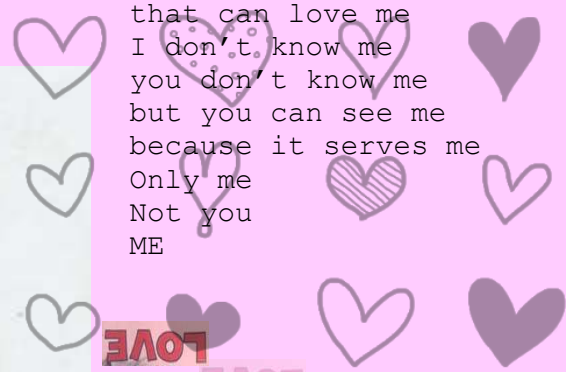
I touched your hand later
and we exchanged words
I said you were beautiful
You said I was beautiful
Something stirred
Seductress, you, seductress
Fools they all are, fools
nobody can have you
you belong to your violin
what did you do to me
red gypsy violinist?
what did you do?

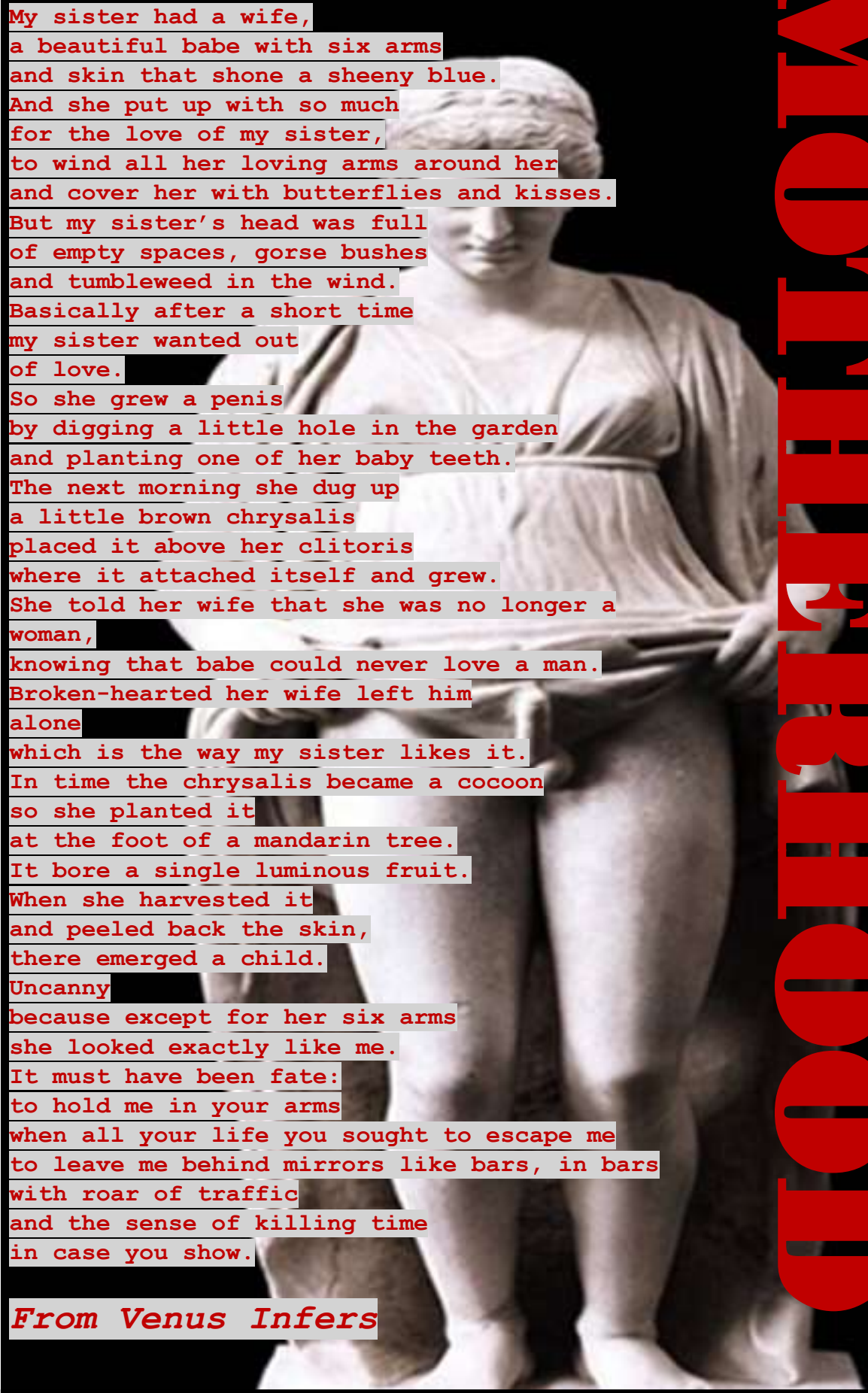


Me myself and
love

I am the only one
that can love me
I don't know me
How can I love you?
I don't know me
I don't know you
I may like girls
I'm not sure
I'm the only one
who can find out
You're a great fuck
That's all you are
I can't like you
I don't even know
what the hell I like
but I masturbate
thinking of you
You can fuck me
better than I can
and you touch better
I am the only one
that can fuck me up
but I will learn me
so all of you let me be
except you, the kisser
you can come over
but you don't
validate me
I validate me
I won't wait
for your messages
to validate me
I am awesome
with or without them
I VALIDATE ME
Did you hear me?
I VALIDATE ME
Not you - ME
I will sit with me
alone with only me
that's all we all have

although others will
delude and deny
but I resist this
I will not fill my canyon
with co-dependency
I will fill it with me
getting to know me
standing alone with me
being strong with just me
and then I'll choose
the right man for me
You don't know me
but you want to
Better I do it first
You cannot cure
the sorrow in my
stillness
only I can do that
I am the only one
that can sit with me
in a place for me
love that me
I am free to be me
to do whatever
to fuck whoever
as many as I want
whenever I want
I am free to explore
because I own me
you don't own me
nobody owns me
I am the only one
that can love me
I don't know me
you don't know me
but you can see me
because it serves me
Only me
Not you
ME





My sister had a wife,
a beautiful babe with six arms
and skin that shone a sheeny blue.
And she put up with so much
for the love of my sister,
to wind all her loving arms around her
and cover her with butterflies and kisses.
But my sister's head was full
of empty spaces, gorse bushes
and tumbleweed in the wind.
Basically after a short time
my sister wanted out
of love.
So she grew a penis
by digging a little hole in the garden
and planting one of her baby teeth.
The next morning she dug up
a little brown chrysalis
placed it above her clitoris
where it attached itself and grew.
She told her wife that she was no longer a
woman,
knowing that babe could never love a man.
Broken-hearted her wife left him
alone
which is the way my sister likes it.
In time the chrysalis became a cocoon
so she planted it
at the foot of a mandarin tree.
It bore a single luminous fruit.
When she harvested it
and peeled back the skin,
there emerged a child.
Uncanny
because except for her six arms
she looked exactly like me.
It must have been fate:
to hold me in your arms
when all your life you sought to escape me
to leave me behind mirrors like bars, in bars
with roar of traffic
and the sense of killing time
in case you show.

From Venus Infers

ALEV ADIL

MOTHERHOOD

On the last day of his life, in the afternoon, Lysandros whispered his last poem about Apollo, the gleaming warrior now disguised as a thousand reeling birds, and slipped irretrievably from the spoken to the written word. His funeral was as theatrical, dignified and unconventional as he was: the gilt splendour of the Greek Orthodox Church in Camden, with all its traditional incense and ritual but also with, controversially, unbelievers, heathens, Turkish Cypriots reading elegies. I'm not sure who persuaded the Greek Orthodox priest to allow such a heresy. Mustafa made sure that Lysandros was buried in Highgate cemetery as he'd wished. The flowers were white. He'd written: 'Anoint me with white flowers when I lose my blessed breath', although there was no 'crown of white flowers, jasmine, held by a golden thread'.

I can't quite capture the grain of his voice, the cadences of his speech, the swoop of a downward inflection at the end of each line, but I can still hear the sound of the handful of earth each mourner flung on the coffin. Years later, when Mustafa opened the tidy little suitcase that held Lysandros' work, poems spilled out, yellow pages like doves, jaundiced with age, or bleached ravens. Silence flocked and filled the room; the air was heavy, as if rippled by invisible moths. His words are a challenge to that silence, if not a refutation of it, while I am putting words on a dead man's eyes. In whose shiny currency are my words minted? Where is the most unjust betrayal? Mourning erases the lost ones, translates them always and only as absence.



**ALEV
ADIL**

MEMORY AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FIDELITY

The Last Time

When was the last time you heard yourself speak?

Heard words scratch notes against the scales of
Aphrodite's seashells,
her discarded armors varnished in jade and
black.

When was the last time you spoke?

Grating and clawing, tearing and scraping;
a speech thickening into rings of fog that
encircle olive plantations
like unfamiliar beacons slipped afar
into a world betrothed for the brave.

When was the last time you mustered a speech?

Whispering within the corners of a home that
suddenly announces you as a stranger
and where you become a dormant corpse within
walls of white and blue plaster.

When was the very last time your voice broke
aloud?

A sound rasping like a borrowed ghost,
murmuring within unlit crooks and unlit turnings
and imperialistic mirrors that veils your
authenticity.

When was the last time before the last time you
spoke?

A concentration of rage lingering within a frayed box
of vocals,

negotiating time upon an unfed soul.

When was the last of the last time, and the

last time before that?

The last that you heard your voice as crisp as winter's eve;
perhaps upon a narrow day
alongside a sanded beach or cold mountain green,
or even beside a faded swing-set where yesterday's child had played.

When, *though,* did you last speak of rainbow colors and drums drumming with tolerance,
furthering a community from blinkered shadows of concealment?

Hear yourself amongst a crowd of unenlightened,
feel the veins throb within your neck;

when was the last time you carried a speech into a theatre of hate
and faced all with a wakefulness that's generously obese.

When was the last time you spoke, *wasn't that the question?*

Collecting a tempest of vowels over a sparse and withered garden
settled against soggy windows received by mountain dew.
Do you find yourself peering inside, searching for the last of your voice abandoned?

Peering through sheets of fogged glass most foreboding
wondering where your echo was mislaid;
was it left to rot within the arms of lovers torn from each other,

lovers abandoned with nil and none,
and the lovers slain within the name of Orthodoxy.

Dear, **dear Cypriots of mine,**
queer and dark,

savaged and reassigned,
surviving and readdressed;
young and old, of compost and wilderness stew,
of beginnings and ends, of birth and renewal;
do not remain voiceless, I plead,
for your life may depend upon it,

Dear, dear
Cypriots of
mine
queer and
dark
savaged and
reassigned

as may the lives of those within our sister lands too.

I ask again, **when** was the last time you heard yourself bellow?
Slicing a screech across old Victorian boards
brushed with chestnut shells and leftover dust.

When was the last time you growled a word distinctively?
Was it an impossible tiding much like a two-word story
wedged within an abundant haze of darkness?

Friend, **when** was the last time you bawled within a field of nothingness,
when chains were broken from bodies
and bodies fell free to roam?

When was the last time someone took you by the hand and led you above ground?
When was the last time someone stretched your neck
and the mutter of words escorted you into the liberty of self-determination?

Sisters and Brothers of Pride, I bid you one last request:

when, oh, **when** was the last time your silence did not make you complicit;
when, oh, **when** was the last time you spoke out?



"*Raw Copper* is centered on invalidation and the disruption of something normal, organic, and beautiful: love. It features my wife, who isn't accepted by my family or culture. That's why she's represented as incomplete, as she often feels disembodied and voiceless by my culture. The flowers surrounding my wife replicate my idea of the Garden of Eden. Before "sin" it was supposedly exquisite. In my portrayal of Cyprus as Eden, it is spoiled by "sin" (hence the snake) but instead of the sin being a crime of homosexuality, it is the sins of homophobia, transphobia, bigotry, misogyny, and prejudice. It is the sin of love being weaponized. The lower part of the painting is an impression of hope. The shoots of light are the next generation coming through the black soil with seeds of change."



Ty Tzavrinou is a British born Greek-Cypriot poet, who is part of the alphabet soup; lives in the States, relocated in 2015 to be with her wife. Ty has two poetry collections, *Twelve Seasons* and *Laundry*, and is currently working on her third. Both published collections feature poems that draw from her Greek-Cypriot heritage; acknowledging experiences of displaced identity, and the empowerment through the mystical influences of Greek/Cypriot matriarchal folklore. Her blog *The Kink of Writing* can be found on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TyTzavri> and may be contacted through londonjerseypress@gmx.com

Alev Adil is a performance artist-poet and academic who has performed internationally, including at The Tate Britain and The British Museum. Her poetry has been included in numerous anthologies of Cypriot poetry in English, Greek and Turkish, and has been translated into eight languages. She has a PhD in multimedia poetics from Central Saint Martin's, and has extensive experience of teaching Visual Culture, Literature and Creative Writing at BA and MA level in universities in the UK and abroad. She is author of *Venus Inferis* and co-editor to *Nicosia Beyond Borders - Voices from a Divided City* (Saqi Books, 2019)

Emre Soykan (isoykane@icloud.com) Art Practitioner / Pronouns: SHE - HER. Born in 1983 in Kyrenia, she has a BA in English Language & Literature, and MA degree in Applied Language Studies. Practicing photography, drawing, wall painting, sculpture and fashion stage design since 2001, she became a member of London Design Biennale and The Foundry, SE11. She has photographed John Foxx and Patti Smith, been the face of Phillip Ward exhibition *Imitation of Crisp: A Happening in the Profession of Being!*, worked with a team of creatives at *Vogue México* as well as Donnie Myers and Jang Hyun Hong of *W Korea*. She created a wall painting for Yuka Blend Art Festival in Cyprus, founded by Derviş Zeybek. The artist currently lives in Lefkoşa, and has begun transition therapy.



EMre SOYKAN





Alexander Koumoullis-Guest has worked as a wooden toymaker, a media analyst, and an astronomer, and has failed in all three. He lives in Tahtakallas and his poetry is in Cypriot.

Sheftalias among charcoals

Recently we floated between minarets
We counted them from the roof,
while I kept stealing glances - eyes askance
searching for yours.

There among mosques,
after a crude compliment - which of course I returned because I'm
a slut
we kissed.

A kiss among kisses,
while on the horizon fireworks burst
leftovers from the bayram

Days among nights,
and now I think I'm bored of you
but have neither heart nor balls to tell you.
Give me an excuse, at least
to part suddenly, and not linger lazily
like two forgotten and - by now - burnt
sheftalias among charcoals
meant for different mouths.

There but not there

Authors: Enver Ethemer and Okan Bullici

Enver Ethemer is a researcher, specialising in gender, sexuality, LGBTQI+ and human rights. He has participated in various civil society and local community projects/platforms in north Cyprus, where he raises awareness and fights for equality, dignity and freedom. He worked on the Initiative Against Homophobia, which struggled to decriminalise homosexuality. He is a founding member of Envision Diversity, leading projects on LGBTQI+, children, and mental and sexual health. He has also organised numerous symposiums on LGBTQI rights and on minority stress. More recently he co-wrote a report on LGBTQI+ rights in Cyprus funded by FES.

Homosexuality was outlawed and penalised under the Criminal Code in north Cyprus. This law was inherited by the British imperialist and it remained until that moment in 2014, when the coloniser's Articles that criminalised homosexuality were removed. Though it has been removed, the colonial legacy of homophobia, transphobia, stigmatisation and marginalisation is still prominent on the island. In Cyprus, we lack legal developments to provide equality and anti-discrimination for LGBTQI+ people; we lack in socio-cultural values and the understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity; we lack in providing legal protections through inclusive policies in education, healthcare and employment. We lack because of the government's unwillingness to respect and respond to daily life practices of the LGBTQI+ community. This results in LGBTQI+ people experiencing a life of struggle that deeply impacts their mental wellbeing. To know more about LGBTQI+ experiences in Cyprus and its impacts on mental health, we carried out a study that made use of the minority stress model. For this we interviewed LGBTQI+ people aged 18-30 with particular focus on their actual 'lived experiences'. Below we share part of this study.



Interview:

Do you feel safe or persecuted in the north?

The feeling is that there is a hidden eye watching over your shoulder. People are aware of the LGBTQI+ community but they ignore them or turn a blind eye to this reality. This nurtures their phobias which transforms into "hate speech, violent verbal attacks or defamation". It is character assassination. Total rejection to the fact we can co-exist in peace, we threaten their existence, and we can only live in the shadows. We are labelled evil and indecent. There is no legal protection at our workplaces or schools. We are targeted, and cannot afford legal fees to take the attackers to court. We are scared of disclosing our identity as it will make us a victim of harassment. By coming out people lose jobs and friends, are physically attacked and even risk losing their life. You feel pressure and marginalisation everyday. You hide yourself.

What would you like to be done to improve things?

We need to move beyond the rhetoric of Criminal Code, which was abolished in 2014. We need to learn to lobby and demand our rights beyond just the legal rhetoric. We need a holistic

change that could lead to real transformation. The legal realm is the basis that gives us good, fertile ground to demand more; however, this is not exclusively a legal problem. It has to do with the Cyprus problem, political discourses of isolation, unrecognition, legitimacy of the government institutions, and other sorts of problems in political, social, economic and legal domains. We need to be more integrated into the global political and economic changes that would have a significant domestic impact and which could provide opportunities to materialise change for us. We need to change our education policy, social policies, our discrimination policies.

Would you consider going to the south to join any kind of civil union for your rights?

This may pressure the north to deal with the issue, but I do think that a civil union will provide benefits.

How do people respond to gay pride?

Because of the ongoing uncertainties in the north, the people felt elevated that we have hope for a change and brighter future. There was support for pride, especially by the media. There was however resistance by some groups and journalists, who see us as a threat and tried to provoke hatred. But you need to stand and be adamant. We are all in the same boat. We either sink or sail together.

Are you discriminated against at work?

Most definitely, our society does not know what discrimination is. They cannot distinguish between a pun/joke and discriminatory speech. They do not know what it is like to live differently and in diversity. They do not know how to share their spaces. They defend their territories by discriminating, using offensive language, and marginalising others. We learnt this when we were little. We do not learn to live with others. We learn to dislike, hate and be racist. We learn only to accept "identical", reject "multiple". We tag and label people, stigmatise and stereotype. These lead to phobias with accumulative discriminatory behaviour at all levels. Yes I am/we are discriminated against in so many ways, and those who discriminate are not aware. The system allows and

rewards them. There is no policy, regulations or laws that stops this. You get crowned for being racist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic here.

Euphoria by Enver Ethem

Euphoria is the word that could describe the overall spirit of the LGBTQI+ community on 27th January, 2014. Erasing the word "sodomy" from the Criminal Code manifested an outburst of triumph over chronically embedded anti-LGBTQI+ sentiment in north Cyprus. The Criminal Code changed and homosexuality was decriminalized. Collectively we shouted out "We are not criminals."

This archaic colonial 'sodomy law' is our disgraceful inheritance left by the British Empire. Articles 171-173 of Section 154 of Criminal Code refused the right to life for the LGBTQI+ community. It considered consensual homosexual acts as "unnatural" and it penalized by imprisonment. It is a concrete metaphor of the LGBTQI+ community's "postcolonial prison cell". The moment in 2014 is indeed elevating, yet the colonial legacy has left us with deep problems rooted at every level within Turkish Cypriot community, where we struggle to produce sufficient change in the legal, social, public and political domains.

1. Legal Problems

The system works against you. There is a lack of regulations and binding policy documents in the private and public sectors. If someone openly declares their sexual identity or orientation, there is no legal safety net that protects them. If someone uses hate speech, profane language or humiliates an LGBTQI+ person, the person must digest it because there is no anti-harassment or anti-discrimination policy to protect them. The sectors use discriminatory practices because there are no legal provisions to protect individuals. The institutional and structural mechanisms are insufficient: there are no equality or regulatory bodies

to monitor institutional practices and implement punitive charges. Hence, the amended penal is void in its impact. Any new clauses have failed to initiate real change yet.

2. Social Problems

Society's perceptions have not changed. The strong anti-LGBTQI+ attitude with widespread homophobia, transphobia and biphobia persist in public arenas. This makes life difficult and risky for LGBTQI+ people to live their identities fully and freely. Instead feeling marginalised and socially excluded, they hide their identity. Schools and education systems are unforgivingly chastising diversity: teachers and other institutional actors work against LGBTQI+ people, punishing them for being themselves. Schools need policies to protect children from forms of discrimination, violence, harassment, and defamation.

3. Political Problems

The political situation is even grimmer. Political parties do not have salient policies or direct manifestos that tackle homophobia, transphobia, harassment, violence, gender disparity, nor do they have plans to take action for structural changes. In the latest election process, president-elect Akinci included gender equality and sexual orientation into his political programme; however, there has not been any solid progress in focusing on LGBTQI+ people struggles (i.e. work-life, school-life, family life,

public institutions, social rights etc). Political parties do not have LGBTQI+ friendly political agendas and policies in their party strategies. LGBTQI+ or gender politics is secondary and trivial.

Even though north Cyprus is far from fully providing equal civil rights to the community, this has not stopped the literary, artistic, and cultural energies of the community and supporters in Cyprus. Below is a list of some excellent events.



Stonewall Riots

The Stonewall riots were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations by members of the gay (LGBT) community against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, located in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City.

On the occasion of Stonewall Riots held in New York in 1969, POST RI, in cooperation with Envision Diversity, will organize a series of activities at POST RI's headquarter.

Programme:

- 4:00pm - Sing Kar around Mirrors
- 6:00pm - Panel on Homophobia and LGBTQ Rights & Discussion
- 7:30pm - Film Screening Kibar Kuir
- 9:00pm - Cocktail & Party

Date: 28th of June

Address: Panayir Cumhuriyet Sok. No. 1A, Kibrisözü, Nicosia



Envision Açık Kapı Festivali

IGBTI Sergi

- Tijen Erat Bir Trans Hıyayesi Gökhan Coşkun
- Bredley Becker 3 Hikaye IGBT
- Yasın Kaskın Kuir Ben- IGBT
- Envision IGBTİ Portreler

Aykut Atasay Kısalar

- Beyaz Atlı Prenses Hoşuna Gelme - 2009 / Arkat Atasay İzlem Ayhan, Zülfa Deniz
- 12. Uçan Süpürge Uluslararası Kadın Filmleri Festivali, 2009
- 11. Ankara, Başkent Film Festivali, Türkiye'den Kadınlar, Gösterim, 2009
- 2. Hangi İnsan Hakları? Film Festivali, Aktivist Filmler: İmbedalı Kadınlar Bülümü, Gösterim, 2010
- 5. Pembe Hayal KuirFest, Kuir Yoldaşlık Bülümü, Gösterim Seçkisi, 2016

Travestiler - 2007

- 7. AFM Başkent Film Festivali, 11 Haziran, 2008
- 2. Hangi İnsan Hakları? Film Festivali, Gösterim, 2010
- Şiddet Cinsiyet Eğitimi

3 Kadın 3 Hikaye

- BM Cinsiyet Eğitimi Ödülü Fotoğrafar
- Şiddet Cinsiyet İlgilendirici Posterler

15 Ekim 2016 Cumartesi - 14:00-16:00 arası - @ Bedesten



Envision Diversity
Sizi Alman Kuir Film
Festivaline Davet Ediyor

Tarih: 9-20 Mart 2018 - Saat: 20:00

Yer: AB Bilgi Merkezi (11A Hasane İlgaz Sok. Lefkoşa)



Bu etkinlik Almanya Dışişleri Bakanlığı tarafından desteklenmektedir

Bu etkinlik Avrupa Birliği tarafından finanse edilen Sivil Hedef Akademi Yurtiçi Eğitim ve İnceleme Merkezi tarafından desteklenmektedir. Bu yayıncı kuruluşun Avrupa Birliği ile ilişkisi yoktur ve hiçbir şekilde Avrupa Birliği'ne bağlı değildir.

UN-Covered

Cyprus's unfinished play between past, present, and future without colour is captured in the Nicosia International Airport, which sits abandoned in the middle. Silence is the feeling there. A site where time is frozen. There "our Cyprus" is uncovered and UN-covered. A postcolonial construction of our minds and bodies, where we are held hostage to narratives of heroic militarism met with concrete blocks paralyzing us. We are the rubber dolls lying there.



Time has a special relationship with the people of this geography. We constantly drift between.

Where is home? Trauma, memory, displacement, melancholia. This is the Cypriots' home psyche. Reverberating between past lives, present woes, future discontent. Yearning to go back in time!



This is a land, where the past dominates the present, overshadows our future. Pain-past conquers. Long present sorrow. Here the future is never vibrant and crispy clear; it is blemished with uncertainty, captured by irreversible destruction and torn psyches in displacement. NEVER can they RECONCILE a way out of there.

Villagers narrate moments of co-picking olives irrespective of ethnic-nationality. They made sweet memories. Others replaced them with bitter black presence. Cobbled streets coloured with JASMINE SCENTS ready for the yellow chatter. Children in Armenian shops for BAYRAMLIK. Our minds travel to Sahin Cinema to watch the blue breeze in Limassol and Larnaca. All accompanied by the shades of palm trees.

Barricading minds with a knot of darkness that sails into the future. Here time elopes nerve snapping agony.

A deformed past-time detains our memories, living rooms, our kitchens, it haunts our existence into a turbulent future.

Words knotted in deep depression, which silently CRY OUT for change, a parade for a bright future! A parade for new scents of colour.

Fanouropita

Bicommunalism is a reinforced binary
that buries dialectic complexity.
Where is the nuance in Bicommunalism?
Where is the Maronite,
the Afro-Cypriot,
the Armenian-speaking Cypriot,
the migrant
and the asylum seeker?



What even is Cypriotness?

I imagine Cypriotness as a fanouropita:
Fanouropita cannot be split back into the ingredients once it
is cooked.
You would never refer to a cake by its ingredients
so why refer to Cypriotness by its 'ingredients'?

Nationalism is distraction-
Distraction from golden passports.
Distraction from Pournara.
Distraction from racial capitalism's ruination.
Distraction from the death in the air and the borders in our
souls.
Distraction from the Mitsero Murders.

Distraction is death.

We can make this cake and in doing so can make the world anew.
In the hope of some kind of queer futurity
A queer Linobambaki futurity
and in the hope of something better than this colonial
sedative we find ourselves drowning in.
I want to disrupt.
I want to dream free, in an unfettered expansiveness.

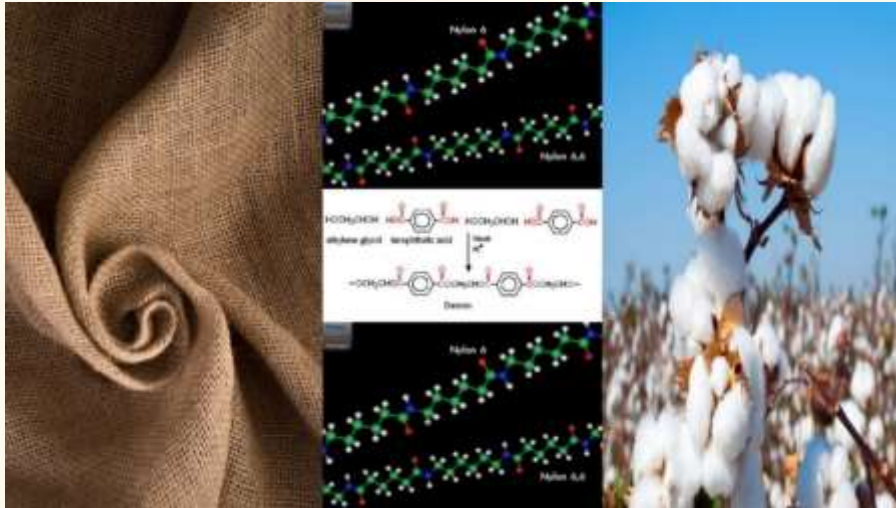
Don't you?

***See Jose Esteban Munoz's conceptual theory on Queer futurity**

***See Karl Marx's conceptual theory on Dialectics**

Anastasia Gavalas is a queer Cypriot woman who studies transnational queer feminist politics at SOAS. They are deeply invested in their Cypriot SWANA identity and in decolonizing what it means to be Cypriot. Anastasia enjoys being

creative and has found different ways to express themselves over lockdown, whether that be through art, music, singing or drag. This happens to be the first poem have written outside of a school context.



Thus, throughout Cyprus' history the people were named via separate religious, ethnic and/or national positions, which solidified the binary. There was, however, an alternative identification named the Linobambakoi -

the linen-cottons - who identified with both ethnoreligious positions, which blurred the binary. The Linobambakoi took form during Ottoman rule, this is a historical identification that made-up a small community excluded by the people in Cyprus as well as the historical record.

The Linobambakoi mocked the order of naming and knowing the people, which discomfited the Ottoman and especially British imperialists, who named them as a hybrid minority - defined as the Christians who converted to Islam, making them a 'Muslim Christian-sect' or 'chameleon-like-sect' (Michell, 758) - of exotic abnormal traitors. Consequently, they were pressured by the British to declare one position - through which they have been confirmed extinct.

**“Abnormal
hybridity”**

Though considered extinct, this book will show the Linobambakoi exist in Cyprus: first, the people of Cyprus use the Linobambakoi, their 'abnormal hybridity', as a tool in their competing narratives to define each other; second, as in the epigraph, the 'genuine postcolonial Cypriot is the Linobambakoi', a hybrid between ethnicities, geographies and cultures because of the postcolonial partition legacy. Unfortunately, however, most people in Cyprus fail to acknowledge their Linobambakoi identification by forbidding names or positions that blur the binary. Here I adapt Costas Constantinou's statement: the most disturbing thing about being a Cypriot is that one refuses their Linobambakoi identification, instead surrendering to an escapist imaginary that there can only be a Greek or Turkish-Cypriot - accepting the foolish fallacy that Postcolonial Cypriot identity is quintessentially and inescapably hyphenated (Constantinou, 248). And so, in solidarity with the Cypriots, I expose and make a nonsense of such naming by

performing with it; here showing there is no identity with one name, there is only identification with many names. [...]

The Linobambakoi were forced to select one ethno-religious category, resulting in their extinction from official records, and a colonial legacy towards hybridity that each community used to define the other: cypriotgreeks define cypriotturks as hybrid Linobambakoi Latin-Christian or Orthodox-Greek who converted to Islam; the cypriotturks define cypriotgreeks via hybrid-mixed blood types. Thus, hybridity is addressed via the racist colonialist discourse (38)

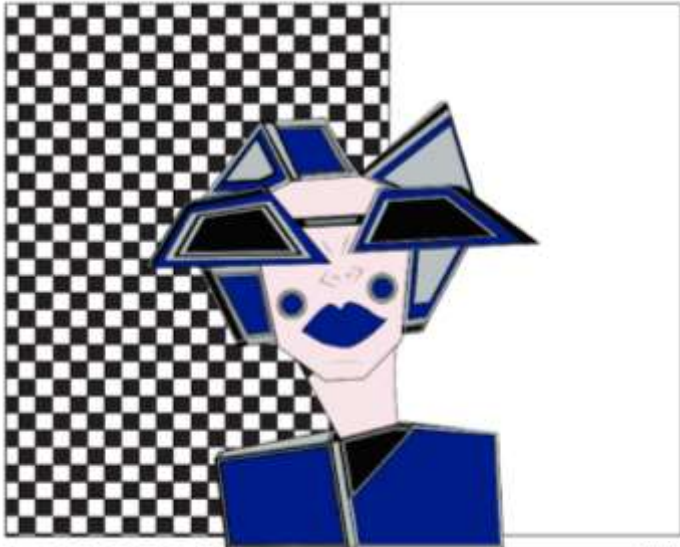
In dominant British and Cypriot narratives the Linobambakoi are commonly defined as Christians who converted to Islam, where they become a 'Muslim-Christian' community of 'crypto-believers', 'traitors' and/or 'crude opportunists' whose ethno-religious normalisation was forced during British rule, ending in them being an extinct historical community excluded from official narrative. However, Constantinou redefines the Linobambakoi as a cross ethno-religiously hospitable community, who are true postcolonial Cypriots: They live in Cyprus, yet without identifying with the monumental nationalist histories [...] [they] remain faithful to the secret that their identity exceeds imperial categories and limits, exceeds the conventional representations of political discourse [...] [-they] corrupt the purity of ethno-national identity. In support of Constantinou, I call all Cypriots the post-Linobambakoi understood via the postcolonial Cypriot diaspora, who negotiate with multiple ethno-religious, national, political, historical and cultural positions shaped by the official and unofficial, and dominant and marginalised narratives. Because of colonialism, postcolonialism and partition the true Cypriot identification can only be a mutable diasporic hybrid within and beyond monumental boundaries. Consequently, the Cypriot diaspora, like the former Linobambakoi, have been marginalised, forbidden and eradicated from Cyprus' grand-narratives. This identification has, however, silently endured, and I have understood it, from, through and with its relegated legacy, thereby enabling the post-Linobambakoi Cypriot diaspora to have a concrete site from which to speak to and with the different positions determined by different places, spaces and times, which contribute in different ways to Writing Cyprus (50)

Post-Linobambakoi hospitality, which identifies with multiple 'positions' that carry the weight of diasporic and Cypriot experiences within the colonial, postcolonial and partitioned moments; these experiences are related to the literary-lived identifications and constructs, official and unofficial, and dominant and marginalised narratives, which capture the making and breaking of multiple Cypruses.

Post-Linobambakoi is an identification that extends the Ottoman Linobambakoi's in-between hospitable positioning and practices, which identify with opposing positions shaped by official and unofficial and dominant and marginalised minds so as to prioritise the latter, thus enabling a cross-ethnoreligious, cross-cultural and transnational production of Cyprus. (220)

Bahriye Kemal, *Writing Cyprus Postcolonial and Partitioned Literatures of Place and Space* (Routledge, 2019)

Ametis is Cypriot artist who lives in North Cyprus. His Instagram name is **@ohmygoditshappeningagain** as is his art



Oh

My



GOD



It's



ning

Happe

AGAIN!



Maria Petrides (b. UK) is an independent writer, editor and translator. She has contributed to magazines/anthologies & art publications, and participated as writer-in-residency in NYC, Nicosia, Istanbul, Helsinki, Rio de Janeiro, Geneva. She's translator of *Wow*, a political comic book by Ariadni Kousela, Patakis Publishers, co-translator of Bill Ayers *To Teach the Journey, in Comics*, contributing author to the book collection *A Book of Small Things*, & assistant editor of Evripides Zantides' *Semiotics: Visual Communication II* (Cambridge Scholars). She is co-editor of *Literary Agency Cyprus* anthology, *Nicosia Beyond Barriers - Voices from a Divided City* (Saqi Books, 2019) and co-founder of artist/research group, *pick nick*.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON

ABANDONED CONVERSATIONS

Their vestiges didn't appear to me until I was caught mulling over the struggles of Donna, a 33-year-old white-working-class-leftish-hetero-woman-cum-heroine. On a habitual walk to work she notices that redbrick high-rises look less sulky on shining days. She looks up readily at the chuckling residents hanging from balconies, Heineken in one hand, The Sun in the other.

"Bet there's a story, 25 MIGRANTS FOUND DEAD IN RUBBER BOAT IN MEDITERRANEAN", she shrieks.

A vacant face. The echo of silence feeds back.

"Turn to page four", she nods to a guy, head shaved, and a red hawk tattooed on his chest. He winks at her, returns a grin, gulps down the beer, shouts 'yup'.

A sizzling sound travels between them.

After being fired from the public library of a South London council for talking too much to visitors, Donna got herself a job at an Oxfam store and in her free time began facilitating a raising of funds for political ASYLEES. Even so, the hearty work wasn't enough to equip her with a sense of humanity. She carried the heftiness of a history whose reconciliation she couldn't come to terms with. Her monologues had grown into gross barriers of social asymmetry. Conversations were languishing, as if their bearing were a leftover from a bygone era. Or the breed of conversations taking place were not reversing conditions enough because the same position was reiterating without any recognition of the peripheral and critical space, from which others resist and discourse.

Where were they happening, if at all, and to whom were they actually bound?

Which position do we occupy and how do we mislocate others since as Iranian psychologist Fathali M. Moghaddam says,

"positioning theory is about how people use words and discourse to locate themselves and others".

As global infusion and public opinion (c)risises, and, spontaneous narratives and artificial democracies spread out and root themselves, respectively, new ways urge us to collect our actions and connect our narratives with those most pushed out of the hastily ebbing humane social reasoning which keeps us tender in the only world we have to live in.

EVERYDAY CHAT

"Where are you from?" the IT guy asked the owner of the computer that he was cracking open, tipping an inquiring gaze from under his spectacles, sideways.

The IT guy turned another sharp squint at Phily, in anticipation of a reply.

Phily exhaled.

Silence.

"Not too far from here", he came out with an impulse of inalienability. A composed face that didn't let off steam.

It never struck Phily that maybe being whiter in a largely white working-class neighbourhood of London would make the cause for racist big talk. But was it because he was whiter or from the E Bloc or simply because he was a working-class bloke. He was a taxpayer who spoke English in a polished cockney accent and had made a pact with himself since he moved to the UK that at no time would he perform his Polishness in the presence of those white lads. His Polish comrades had warned him.

CONVERSING TRAVERSING REHEARSING

"We don't have any answers, but we can at least start a conversation, like so many other people are doing right now" rumbles Nina Hoss. Interview, theatre, performing time. Thomas Ostermeier's stage adaptation of Didier Eribon's Returning to Reims? That was 2009. The German play in a French memoir via a personal narrative of Hoss', the lead's communist father and trade unionist. It's 2019. What part of life is left. Globally left.

- why has the traditionally leftwing French working class turned to the extreme right? Considering the production and reproduction of class inequality and THE HIDDEN INJURIES OF CLASS. Didier Eribon's enduring beginnings, and Richard Sennett in a critique of everyday life.
- anthropologists and sociologists are drawn into arcane, meaningless discourses, dissociated from popular struggle. You can see the impact. They indicate how the level of irrationality that grows out of this, undermines the opportunities for doing something significant and important. Noam Chomsky reclaims.
- the global left has cast away the working classes. Some are finding significance in the Age of Trump, the BOMB spewed out.

Somewhere in the midst of class loss and cheating, intellectual impermeability, a shrinkage of white privilege, heads might like to turn back to the historical losses-cum-trauma of Black people and People of Colour, and consider, for the first time, how space politics have always mattered and always will matter.

CRITICAL WHITENESS, A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS

It begins with seeing. Seeing one's whiteness through someone else's eyes. Becoming aware of one's own whiteness. what it performs. what it denies. what it appropriates. This layer of whiteness bespeaks a dis- position to

shift relations of positions from that of the white middle-class subject to that of being perceived as an overshadowing signifier of power and panic.

- We become visible through the gaze and vocabulary of the white subject describing us: it is neither our words, nor our subjective voices printed on the pages of the magazine, but rather what we phantasmally represent to the white nation and its real nationals. Enraged, Grada Kilomba SPEAKS.
- Here, we are speaking in our own name, and about our own reality, from our own perspective, which has been silent for too long. Stuart Hall, and Jacob Sam-La-Rose, break silence.
- Structures of domination work in one's own life, as one develops critical thinking and critical consciousness, as one invents new alternative habits of being and resists from that marginal space of difference inwardly defined. bell hooks.

AVERRING QUEERNESS

A few decades later, George Chauncey reminds us that the continuing power relation of class and race sustains systems of social domination. The power of sexual shame exercises its dehumanisation and violence on queer bodies. The Queer body is visible and embodies visibility. These bodies inhabit a shared space in which they are deliberately disregarded because of that which they desire to aver. Queerness is willfully overlooked at home, during discussion, after adolescence, inside the classroom, within confrontation, in social space, under the law, on the playground, behind bars, all over the place. AND still, the queer body performs its resistance and preserves its distinguishability, not as a body that the white, hetero, middle-class man makes different through a process of discrimination, and in relation to a paradigm he has masterminded, monopolised and memorialised. BUT the queer body performs its resistance and preserves its distinguishability AS a body site-ing itself in an empowered space from which it nourishes its own knowledge, invents possibilities, prevails everywhere by bringing about its subjectivity each time through the body's own relationship to itself.

The female Japanese Macaque-monkey indulges in sex with other females because she uses a greater variety of positions and movements than males do. Discovering that more movement has maximized genital sensations for the female Macaque!

ENABLED BODIES' NORMATIVITY & SOCIAL STATUS

The normalisation of the body goes beyond gender.

"I can go into a coffee shop and actually pick up a cup with my mouth and carry it to my table but then that becomes almost more difficult just because of normalizing standards of our movements and the discomfort that that causes when I do things with body parts that aren't necessarily what we assume that they're for. That seems to be even more hard for people to deal with", painter and disability activist, Sunaura/Sunny Taylor tells us while walking with a mission in San Francisco, alongside Judith Butler.

There are socially constructed ways of using and un-using the body that "can't" move in certain ways since the particular body has boundaries ordered by the body itself which don't allow it to. Yet the same body "can" still create movement, even when conditions outside the body and its own desires do not permit it to. It unbinds itself from oppressive social conventions, effectively organised by enabled bodies that create disabling effects for bodies they disfavour.

Who are the disabled?

Those whose body impairment is part of a noticeable and alienated composition or those whose enablement allows them to authorise an invalidation of the removed lives of others?

Instituted status

stifling

movement, mobility, motility.

Regulated system, curbing

the degree of ease to exercise your freedom

to

surge

its

bent

But Butler. Enabled bodies ought to butt out of their temporal brutality. Impart those assumptions self-proclaimed learning cloaked in systematised perversion.

Yes, "maybe we have a false idea that the able-bodied person is somehow radically self-sufficient", surmises Butler.

STAYING WITH TRANSITIONS

As part of a course on experimental writing at a northeastern state university, Jennifer DiGrazia and Michel Boucher shared a story that came from one of their classes which focused on queerness and writing.

We begin class with introductions. The twelve students interview each other and introduce their partner to the class. The circle ends with us, the co-teachers of the course. Jennifer introduces Mitch:

"This is Mitch. He's a grad student in American Studies".

"Wait a minute. Did you just refer to Mitch as 'he'?" asks one student. Directing the next question at Mitch, he asks, "Are you transgendered?"

"Yes," Mitch replies.

Thinking about how transgender bodies are represented visually, Jack Halberstam aptly says:

While the transgender body has been theorized as an in-between body, and as the place of the medical and scientific construction of gender, when it comes time to picture the transgender body in the flesh, it nearly always emerges as a transsexual body. But the transgender body is not reducible to the transsexual body, and it retains the marks of its own ambiguity and ambivalence. It performs self as gesture not as will, as possibility not as probability, as a relation—a wink, a handshake and as an effect of deliberate misrecognition.

...

"A client told me that I had the roundest breasts he had seen and that he thought I was a real woman," Cindy trumpeted through what looked like an affected smile.

Fixed on deleting DEAD PEOPLE from her phone, as she called them, Sheila peered at Cindy, spurting,

"Perceptive man. Did you tell him that?"

Distant and determined at once, Cindy aimed at the door's exit speaking under her breath, "I was touched by what he said. Just because I didn't weep it doesn't mean I wasn't. I'm on vazepam".

TENDERING PINK READINGS

The boudoir, larger than the living room, had been converted from a reclusive atelier to a woman's society, not classified. In the beginning there were a handful of women. Later, dozens more burst forth, like wishes unfurling by the anemochory of dandelions. They pulled down the scarlet velvet curtains and opened the white casement windows out onto the southern Seine, panes translucent enough to turn what was inside out onto the Left Bank. An invisible megaphone accompanied them, amplifying their voices on days of low temper and poor humour. Reticent and racy, angular and corpulent, liberal and traditional, middle-class and lower, French and Cypriot, Algerian and American, all posed together in chambers and in books. Paris it was, women they were, and the 1930s were transforming from the myriad who wanted to thrust themselves into public view. Depleted of their faculties for so long, they reached the ripened moment to carve up social space for their personal and public desires to transpire, exposing then the disempowering gaze which contained them as those other bodies that desire to be desired. They equipped themselves in dress and in attitude to arouse crowds, readers, and viewers to examine them inside and out, and defied being reified or portrayed as mere fleeting objects of male desire and domination. Women were, more than ever, well versed in finding their way back into the very selective history that had abidingly pushed them out. Their distinct subjectivities were calling for new articulations, to have and to hold. And their stories, historical and figmental at the same time, would change the present-day. From tomorrow they would never again be forgotten from the near histories they wanted to make: writers and dancers, designers and entertainers, poets and painters, working women, women caring and cooking, photographers and sculptresses, women lovers, queer and heterosexual. The aura was such a sensation.

...

Woman-to-woman and woman for woman and for man, she thought. Do was a dreamer. Pensive and romantic. She absorbed herself in books-cum-paintings. Entering them she dreamed up how to cross in sundry ways. She crossed geographies, gender and genre. From suburbs to city centres, hamlets to landmasses, and islets to alps. The bounds separating them were like flowerbeds woven together into a vast web that anybody or any impalpable thing could crisscross. They were both as imaginary to Do. Borders and unity. Yet, for either, you had to struggle, in warfare or undivided care.

She loved how she could decentre stories and be genderless inside them, dressed in a camel gabardine, an azure blue tie in small knot, and knee-high skirt. Stolid in soaking up her surroundings one minute, while the other, with the face of an infant puckishly plucking the grips of adults. Or how she could incarnate whoever she wished to be through the characters she drew out, the colours she merged, the extra ordinary figures she magically brought to life in her own treatment of them.

A book, as a painting, she mused, could take you to places deep and distant, near and far from where you were transporting you to where, maybe you want to be. They flutter you, call upon you to get closer to the hidden parts of the smaller guarded world around you. Either way you meet somewhere between then somewhere else. And you might even be reading about the lives of others believing that you are (re)living your own in remembrance or in a future enactment.

...

"Recline, any way you wish. I would like this to be a nude portrait, half-nude, to be exact. Could you take the wrap and drape it around your waist, whichever way you want," the painter said.

"Yes, that's quite fine. But I have two requests: I won't smile or look at you or future ravenous viewers who fix their eyes on me," demonstrated Lyric as she glanced at the azure ceiling.

Amused, the painter added soberly, "you're the protagonist now. There is only one rule: to bring out your gestures, to vent them."

A portrait of another woman, assumed Do. The painter had invited Lyric to laud her liberty and Do was endeavouring to understand this freedom by reading how Lyric articulated her body. She then studied the way that she crossed her legs and arms, how that crossing toppled the ogle and diffused its intensification, while the painter was stroking her edges. How she held the position of her arms and shoulder with such poise. Lyric came into this modern moment and interplayed as she felt free to do.

Do thought of the women painted by Jacqueline Marval, who they were, how they looked and toward where they paused their vision. Very often they turned away from the painter, glanced at each other, into the sea, at other bathers. The intense colour and painterly qualities suggested a certain boldness that intrigued her. She also held the image of Lotte Laserstein's self-portraits and her portraits of other women and their lived experience reflected in singular representations, with short-cropped hair, and often looking through a mirror, whole or compact. If male nudity exhibited power and female nudity showed sexuality, these women painters were creating a world wherein nudity was a manifestation of their own power and sexuality, Do meditated.

And then she returned to Lyric. Her breasts swollen orbited around her muscularized and fleshy torso, and her left arm, erect, put on view the hair growing. She bearded the

stunned gazes. Underarms and breasts, the two parts of her very own body projected, defiant. Her mahogany mouth gleamed, her eyes arrested in subjectiveness exhibited a new type of woman. An air of fortitude exuded. She had a waxy shimmer and a backbone that promised to carry other women wherever they could be emboldened, imagined Do. The new woman. She interchanged her place with Lyric, and she longed for her readiness to shift positions with women she had never known but with whom she felt intimately acquainted. The subject illustrated in this microcosm was women, their bodies, and their sexualities.

...

Sissy remembered that halcyon day in February of 1925. It was prematurely sticky, and it stretched out into darkness. They jauntily sauntered through the neighbourhood park early in the afternoon, making up stories about towns and mainlands they had dwelled in, feeding each other fantasies from outlandish places they would drop in.

"We'll fall from the skies, hand in hand," said Dida, almost chanting.

"Promise," Sissy said.

Their desires would not be quelled, they would acclaim their heroic right to free themselves from dictation, decorum and decisions that weren't their own. That Sunday was unusually airy like their wallowing in the balmy grass.

As night fell, they walked towards Dida's apartment. In front of the burgundy apartment building, Sissy stood on the chipped footstep, Dida slightly below. The streetlamp dimmed, as if summoned. A faint hum came to her, calling the twinkling. She spooned Dida's silky ear in her palm, and then swooned.

"Stay, don't diffuse! Just stay here with me, I'm dizzy with madness," she poured out, trembling.

"I'm here, there is no place to go without you," said Dida softly. An avowal that didn't anticipate an echo.

"I had a dream that you floated away, from right in front of my eyes, uncurling from my arms. I rushed to grab you. Untiring, I was. And yet I couldn't move." Sissy instantly inhaled.

"I could see myself flooded by a surge of waves and you slipping away, farther away with each blink."

"Oh, even so I would find my way back to you. Here, again and again," swore Dida.

A stomach-to-stomach stroke and they fell into a rooted kiss. It was Sissy's magic first. The lifelong craving unfurled in that instant, repeated forever with Dida. She was being born then, now, thereafter. She hadn't existed before. For the first time she sniffed her own body hair, a tinge of tart crust; she liked it. She wanted to preserve the evening in her body's memory and in her mind.

That episode, singular and universal, was like a deeper past knotted with the unquestionable present of Dida. She was she. Her sanguine complexion marked her among the Parisian crowd, the right thumb and forefinger stitched to each other

since her birth. Earlier that day when they shared enigmas, Dida told Sissy a secret. She still recalled her mum telling her how the doctor had announced that one of her fingers were missing. "I gave you that, it's your charm," she had told her when she was 12, and old enough to understand that the folk custom was to convert debility into a providence as an endowment to determine a girl's future husband.

...

Her grandma, a writer in hiding, had run away from her native Calvados in Normandy with the farmer's oldest son to surrender to the magic of metropolitan Paris. She was 26 and he 37. They never turned back and they never married. In self-exile they settled, topping hardships and rebuffing legalisations. They coiled around one another, attending to each other's craving for love until the day they lost their last breath. When talking became a wrestle with their rickety lungs, correspondence through note writing ripened into the sole way to keep their nerve bustling and to cling in carnal contact, to finger the skin of each other for the days remaining.

She held onto those notes during tuberculosis even as the paper deeply aged, cracked and grew sallow. She memorised the lines like verse. There was a magnetism that drew her to the bedside table, her grandma's table, handed down to her from her mum and now, cuddling it almost, she was sleeping by its side, as if their vestiges were sealed within. It was as if the rugged smell of wood, the damp scent of paper, and those sentient words had wedded the withering seasons of her grandparents' life together. There was something noble in their union in bed, copiously sharing love. She discerned that. She pored over their love notes whenever she evoked changes in her own body, or when she longed for transformation. As she read to herself, the voices shuffled, the words transposed. It didn't seem to matter who was speaking, they were interchangeable through their intensity and realness. She read aloud.

"We nurtured each other, hand to hand as we hurdled over troubles."

"The number of silences are measurable on this hand that clenches yours, melting, touching you."

"Our love revived each extraordinary day and not one day passed without you flowing into me."

"We lived outside the bounds of time, made up our own rules of loving and living."

"Birds chirping, our mornings-awaking-thirst were quenched when singing with them."

"Skipping across the road to land in each other's embrace."

...

They were lolling on the seashore, resting at childhood again. Free and fun, the world around them would be a player in their personally orchestrated game. The young women wanted to remain there, in that place and age where being nude hadn't yet climaxed in social tensions, which would lead in haste to immutable regulation. Before the excessive male sexualization

of female nudity would, in effect, scapegoat you, and earlier on, when you were quietly discovering unfairness for the first time. They craved that age when you asked yourself, and never really figured out what it was about you that made you so exploitative. They knew that, now, having entered adulthood unceremoniously. And something about the sea behind them, eternity beside them, the curiosity inside them, created what felt like a lasting affinity between Dora, Yasmin, and Cadie. As they stretched out into the surroundings, memories stirred from their near past, and although their stories were dispiriting, they each shared a piece of themselves, chortling.

Yasmin was the gregarious of the trio. She loved to chat. If there was silence in her company, she would be overwhelmed by a startling sense that something she had said had set the mood. So, she grappled with silence, as if it were a leech or a black hole equipped to blot you out of poise, and she mused until she would eventually break the pregnant quiet with laughter.

"Do not speak unless you are spoken to", my mama would warn me in the same stern tone each time she dressed me before going out in public. I was 10, but I had a very strong sense that this forewarning, the finger shaking, meant girls did not initiate. "Young ladies," as we were then called, Yasmin trumpeted in a wry grin, "did not lead any-thing or any-one, they merely followed. And we were expected to model ourselves on that nonsense."

As Dora sucked up Yasmin's story, she ached to allay her grief. Every time we went to the beach my mother would say to me, "If you stare at the sun you'll go blind, that's why you can't look at it for too long."

"I never quite fathomed my mum's motive for telling me something as minacious as that, except that all mothers had incentives when it came to their daughters. But an event that was to me so happy and healing became sinister, something to be frightened of." Dora eyed the sun as she confessed to Yasmin and Cadie, hearing for the first time how ludicrous her mum's premonition sounded, and realising that, in effect, what had troubled her for so long now consoled her as she listened to the triad of titters.

The sounds of their mirth reverberated as the sea breeze stroke their faces. Cadie smiled softly as she spoke.

"My dad s/mothered me. All year round he cloaked me in pale, pink, velveteen blankets pulled up to my neck as he strolled me around in this immune-from-the-world baby carriage. After I started walking, the blankets became inflated jumpsuits that I couldn't take off myself," she said with sincere affection.

"My birth mum died as I was exiting her. I never knew what she looked like while she was carrying me into the world," Cadie spread her smile. "'You were born out of earnest love and life-threatening pain,' my dad would routinely remind me as I was growing up".

Cadie occasionally had visions of her mum, the sounds of her voice, her body's smell, how she walked. She remained a divine invention to her.

...

Walking at a lingering pace a little later that night after leaving Dida behind her, Sissy savoured the first lasting kiss across her open face, above her a geranium halo of aftertaste. Arrested by her aura, she was shortly interrupted by a chilling sensation of somebody's breath crawling down her spine. She veered away from her route, and turned a sharp corner to baffle the chaser and try to catch sight of him. Alarmed by the impending moment, she bent into her stomach, pushed her fist into her jacket's pocket and clung onto her penknife. She held her long-drawn-out breath, waiting to be assaulted or at best insulted.

"Don't...no..., keep away from me," the words came in spurts across her heavy breathing.

Nothing there. Nothing. No attack. No sound. Just her panting. There was no brutal man behind her. She stood up, huffed again, assuaging her terror. And suddenly, an abandoned hotel loomed in front of her, raw scars of German cannons permeated it not many years ago. Forever now, the hotel read, as she gaped at it. She took a longer moment to compose. The halo seemed to have dissolved. The infinite minute expired, her voice sounded as she hastened home.

The heightened incident had awakened her. There may have been no one there then but she felt that she bore the credence of women's stories, many of which have been chased by menace. As though Sissy carried them all in a locket anchored to her neck, sometimes caressing her and at instants, choking her. Had she plunged into a passage of other women's pasts on that springy Sunday, was it just a sliver of another's future, her own maybe? This incorporeal necklace was saturated with tales that were passed on to her through oral histories, those that she recollected and (re)imagined, and now the chronicle that befell her that very Sunday found its place there. They were all, she felt, hemmed in that historical kiss with Dida, ripening into an eonic kiss, ageless and monumental.

NAKED
Serpentes

How can my venom be
compared favourably,
to that of human brain's?

See how each tongue
stands and waits there;
biding its time to secrete
its payload of venomous words.

More lithe than I can ever be,
see how easily you slither
amongst your hellish thoughts -
and all, without hurting backs!

But then, you too have to crawl
(and that's where we're equal)
before those you can't rebel against.

Forgive us, accursed Medusa;
dreading those whose lives
are no more than a living hell,
we shouldn't have fled or sought refuge
amongst your silky blond curls.

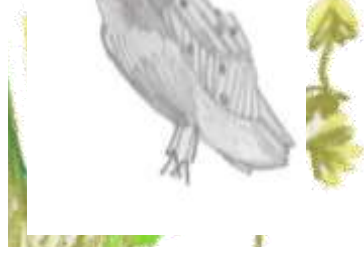


CROW
Corvus

I was a bird
of night,
truth-telling, white...
They cut out my tongue -
hence my lack of lyricism.
But I still spoke out,
and got banished from the night
So I had to help myself
(and that's how I became a
thief)
to a darkness I could call my
own.
You offered me the liver
of Prometheus (declined, of
course -
I'm not ignoble like the
eagle).
I held out against my exile,
and dressed up in black
(But this too attracted
the envy of the night).



Your Mr Owl,
that unworthy yes-man,
couldn't keep his eyes off my
throne...
Ah! You virgin Athena;
Oh! You cruel Apollo;
you found truth too much to
bear,
on your puffed-up shoulders.



MR. OWL*
Strigiformes

And since when, Mister,
have you become a bird?
Since the day you banished
the crow,
I presume, from the night
together with Athena & Co?

And since when, Mister,
have you become a bird?
Since those dark ages
when,
the sun and the moon were
chasing each other, I
presume?

And since when, Mister,
have you become a bird?
Since the 13th month
was deleted, I presume,
to drive bad luck off
calendars?

And since when, Mister,
have you become a bird?
Who can be sure the lid
on Pandora's Box was

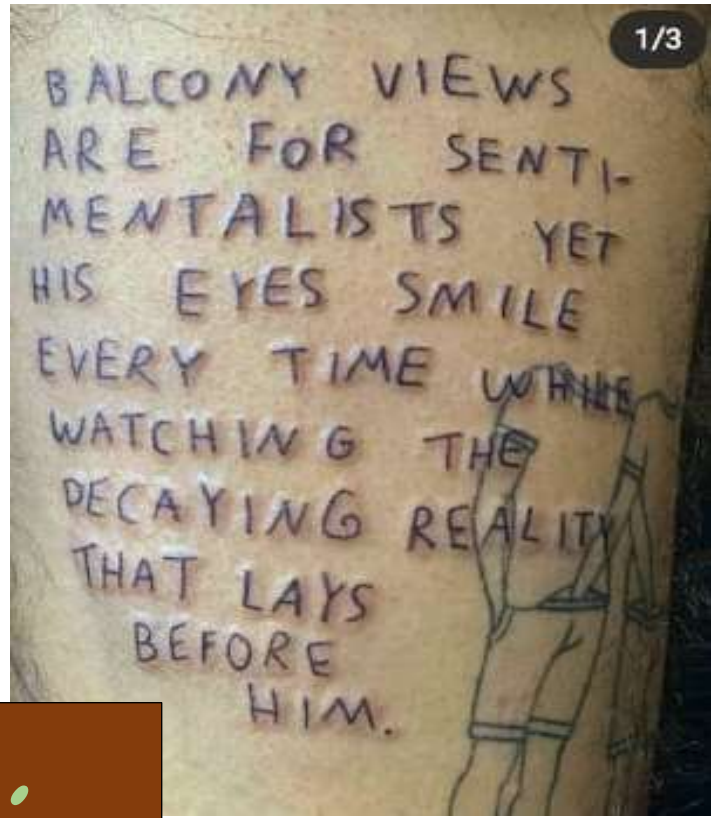


intact,
while you were watching
over it?

*'Baykuş', the Turkish
word for 'owl', literally
means 'Mr Bird', hence my
title.

ART BY HENNY SHAW

Tamer Öncül was born in 1960 (Nicosia, Cyprus). He graduated from the Dentistry Faculty of Istanbul University (1984). He is a poet and critic with over 20 book publications. He founded 'Cyprus Turkish Artists and Writers Union', where he acted as general secretary. At present, he is on the management committee and is one of the editors of *Zaman Mekan İnsan*, its official publication. Öncül was also one of the founders of *Pygmalion magazine* (1993). Since 1990, his cultural writings have appeared in *Ekin Gündemi* and he has a column at *Yenidüzen newspaper*. His poetic journey started in mid-1970's, when 'social realism' and 'Cypriot sensibility' were core, and has since experimented with new form. His poems and writings have appeared in Turkish, German, French and Cypriot magazines and individual texts have been translated into English, German, Italian, French, Greek, Latvian, Russian, Macedonian, Romanian, Azerbaijani and Arabic.



Lefki Savvidou

aka Lé Boob, (b.1990, Cyprus) is a visual artist, writer and illustrator. She uses text as her main medium for her work, which focuses on human relationships and life's perceptions in the 21st century. Since 2011 she has taken part in solo and group exhibitions in Cyprus, the UK and Greece and was one of Bucketfeets (US/JP) artists whose shoe design has been selling worldwide for the past 5 years. Her work has also appeared in numerous magazines and independent zines and publications.



Serhan Salih at 33 chose the name SarKerInk. Through writing and painting, SarKerInk explores the journey of suffering with anxiety and depression, exposing the harsh truths of fear, love, and losses from personal accounts of mental illness. Writing and painting has become a tool for strength and survival: 'using the power of words I speak truth, and allow my identity to be free of judgement'. Writings can be found on his blog. @SarKerInk tumblr.com.

Depression, Anxiety - The Thoughts, see me now!

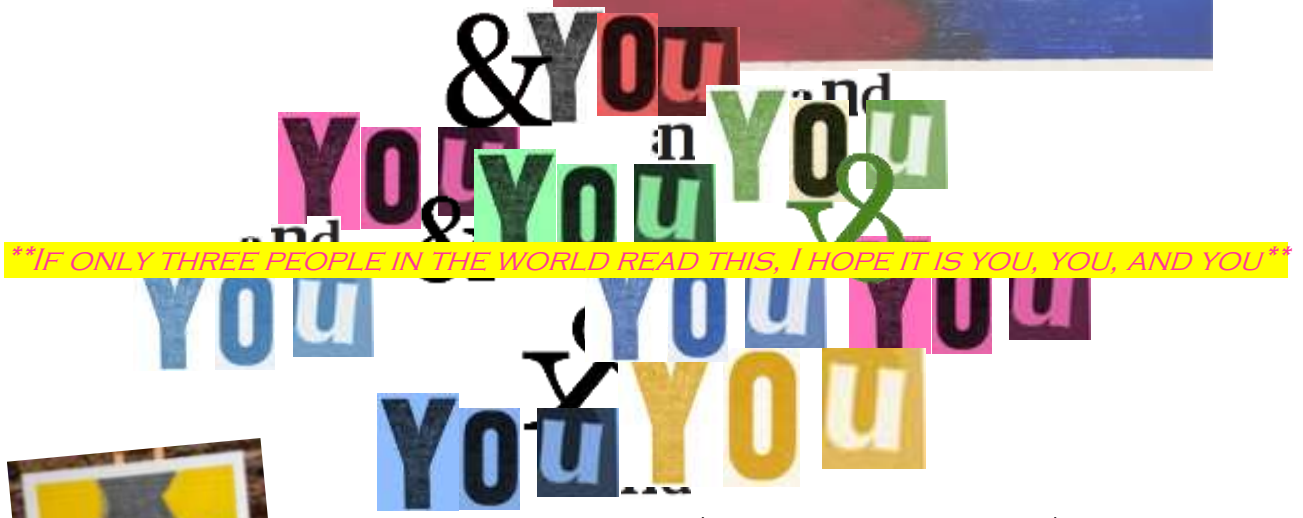
Whoever reads this book will be touched. Why? Because I am you, The Thoughts come directly from my Depression and Anxiety. Fear, a timeless common that brings us together.

For most of my adult life, I have been told I think too much. All because I asked why.

24th August 2019

I have always loved writing, the feeling of the pen while it skims over the page leaving an ever-lasting imprint on the path to an unknown end.

I am not good at writing but today I have discovered I like it. Teachers always encouraged the more creative aspects. The philosophers



guided me away and advised me to study film studies instead. I was not good enough to write. Several note pads have come and gone with little or minimal entries. I hope this one is different.

Today I travelled outside of the UK. My first solo trip, something I have always been too afraid to do alone. Now in the city's centre, smoking a joint, I let go. I am becoming content with me. Fear is the

root cause of my anxiety. Like the event horizon of a black hole, fears unwillingly drag into that singular point within. They live in my mind's core, my only knowledge is that they exist; I do not know the substance they hold within. I will deal with these deep emotional miss-connections. Is it possible to bend the fabric of time, travel back to the fears entering the fibres of my brain. We are not born with these fears, yet these substances build our charters. How does one remove judgment, anxiety then depression from their everyday processing? To say, goodbye. It no longer exists. To not be concerned with what other people think, not waiting for change, not going over and over and over and over the same. Contentment right now in Amsterdam. Without fear of the thoughts. I feel the voices following them as they broadcast onto the page. Today I learn to let go of the fear of judgment by others, it will not hold the right to control. Approached by the waiter working in a small café, the tables are small with bright vibrant Mosaic tiling. We exchange words on feeling at peace when travelling alone writing. My insides jump out, I am noticed. I will not pretend I am happy. Understand the things I need to leg off, face the fears I ignored for this long.

25 August 2019

Same level of thought process, different levels of questioning. Why do some people have a desire to understand their emotions, and others are just content? Does everyone have a turning point in life, a crossroad that changes who you become? I need to find peace,

and must deal with my shit. (I have got my shit to deal with).

A therapist treating me said, 'anxiety and depression are not common'. For weeks after that session, I pondered what she meant by this. She later explained that we choose to be depressed and anxious in different ways. So, I could choose how depression and anxiety controls me. Live life in two ways: One, enter fear, lose control in dark places that define me; two, self-acceptance. Something triggered anxiety, a physical feeling in the middle of my chest close to my heart is very present, and as I read back I must believe this tightness is because of the topic I choose. What is it that causes me to feel this way today?

26 August 2019

Today I spoke to a local (x-pat), who was looking to live in the city; he has only been in Amsterdam for a week. The EU, as a site with open borders and freedom of movement to see and experience, is what I will miss when the UK leaves. Through every conversation I have with myself or with a stranger, I am learning to speak. Walking from coffee shop to coffee shop, I accept I am weirdly deep, surrounded by people who dismissed and mocked me. Repeating the same thoughts over and over, and over...not letting go. Let go!

26th August 2019

I have spent 3 days alone, but not lonely. My first sober entry (not had a joint yet). It's magical walking the streets of another city solo. Exploring time, self, place. Now much lighter. With lesser

fears, limiting the need for confirmation from everyone. I applied boundaries. At 33. To say, stop constantly calling or messaging, I would reach out. I understood her concerns, lonely and depressed in a foreign country. Every time my phone buzzed, I became mum's entrapped child. A picture of a cat. Depression halts emotions to miss and need. So much shit in these woods, but with each doggy bag it seems I've collected and removed quite a bit. Perhaps another get-away?

That gay sauna on my last day in Amsterdam. An experience!

Planning my next semi solo trip to Amsterdam. Now not with my own mind(s), yet wishing. I no longer fear myself as much. To write on the move, mapped a true reflection of the inner workings of my mind here and in therapy. Lost in the ink and black pages of writing and un-writing fear.

My therapist once asked me: "What was the thing you did that made you forget to eat".

30 August 2019



Haji Mike,

is dub poet, radio presenter, DJ, writer,

academic. He has an extensive eponymous social media presence having featured on the BBC's *Rhythms Of The World TV*, and with Andy Kershaw in the early '90s. He has gone on to grace numerous radio stations, host a TV show and his dub music has appeared on many underground artists' creations on dub music, hip hop, acid funk and world music. He's toured various countries from South Africa, Japan, UK, Greece, USA, Ireland, France, Portugal as a MC, DJ and dub poet. Currently he DJs on *GreekBeat Radio* in London from Nicosia. He is also an Associate Professor at The University of Nicosia, where he teaches Digital Media and Communications and has lectured at conferences throughout the world. He edited *Art And Social Justice - The Media Connection* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing) and recently completed research on *Bob Marley Radio*. In 2017 Haji Mike joined a band, the Highgate Rockers aged 57. In the summer of 2018, they recorded their debut LP *RLY?* at Real World Studios. He helped found the new studio Blind Dog, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

MIHALAKIS [Mihalakis Is a Dub Style](#)

| [Haji Mike \(bandcamp.com\)](#)

Mihalakis is my name. It's how I was baptized. Emigrating to England in 1964, seeing snow for the first time in my life, and concrete buildings with many floors was a big culture shock, especially at the age of 4.



In the process of emigration, I became known as Michael (on my passport), Mike for short. But that name I was born with always stayed in my mind. So much so that the first poem I performed publicly, sometime in the 1980's was called 'Mihalakis'...which eventually became a [dub song](#), produced by Tony Muttley. The poem was also published by Apples & Snakes in 1993.

'Call Me Mihalakis' is also a drawing by my friend Sonia Joseph, based on the poem and knowing me... It's a bit ghostly..but I really like the facelessness of the image. That feeling really captured the sentiment of the poem. Performing

it so many times, I would always get someone coming up to me at the end and saying they went through exactly the same things...

The LGBTQIA+ Cypriots connected with this poem. It was featured at one of the biggest Cypriot events I DJ'ed at in the late 1980s. The event was in a secret location in Elephant & Castle, an event for the Cypriot Gay and Lesbian group based in Haringey. They could not publicise the event, so it worked much in the same way as an illegal rave party, all word of mouth and mobile phones. We didn't even know where we were DJ-ing at until we crossed the river. This was one of the best Cypriot events I ever played at back then. The only thing you felt that night was universal love. We played back-to-back versions of chiftetelia in both languages and people went mental belly dancing together. There were about 500 people at the event. The community with big C was sleeping, and still is.

So, like many things I do, this is about respect and universal love;

it's the core thing we lack in Cyprus. We are taught to hate and despise each other. It is about having a right to a name, about a right to self, the choice of being who you want ... as simple as that. We are denied that by so many people in our lives, who define who we are according to their stereotype. I think this is why a lot of Cypriot Gay and Lesbian people related to the poem, because they were always denied the right to be who they wanted to be.



Mihalakis

At school

They gave us all kinds of names

Dished out on playing pitches

And over stormy dining tables

They called me many names

I had more nicknames than the
years has days

More nick names than the sun
has rays

Them call me colour

Call me paki, diego, whop, spik
and darkie

Them call me class

Said I should work like my
parents

Sweating buckets

Long hard hours present past

Them call me intelligence

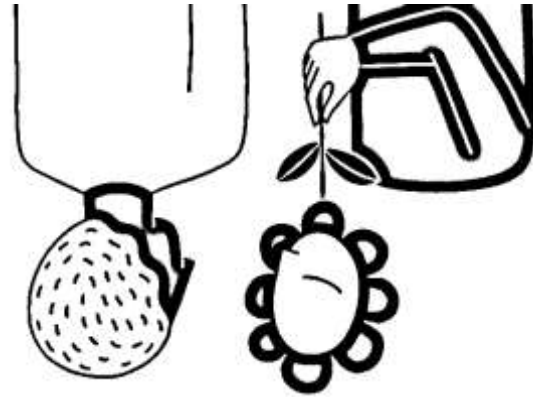
Said I was good at

Rugby and footie

But my maths and history was

dodgy and awkward

Them also call me



Culture

Said I was schizophrenic

Trapped in some kind of bi-
cultural panic

Lost in Britain

And not proud of it

Call me colour

Call me culture

Call me class

Call me

All kinds of.....

Nothing....

But them never call me

Mixalakis

By my name

For that

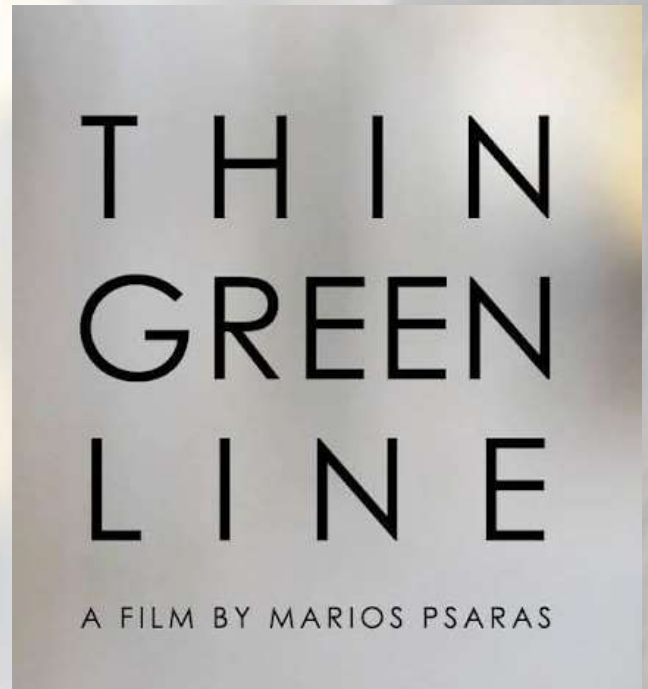
Was all

I

Ever

Asked...

MARIOS PSARAS is a Cypriot filmmaker and scholar living in London. He holds a BA in Education and Philosophy and an MA and PhD in Film Studies. He is the author of the first book-length study on contemporary Greek cinema, *The Queer Greek Weird Wave: Ethics, Politics and the Crisis of Meaning* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Psaras has taught film theory at Queen Mary, King's College London, University of Greenwich, and has lectured widely across Europe. He has published articles, reviews and book chapters on contemporary Greek, European and global queer cinema. Psaras has previously worked in education, radio and TV production, and has directed for the theatre and cinema. He has produced and directed four short films and two short documentaries. His



most recent short film, *The Call* (2020), has won Special Mention at the 43rd Drama International Short Film Festival and is currently screening at film festivals worldwide. Psaras is a member of the Hellenic Film Academy, artistic director of the annual festival Cyprus Short Film Day, London, and a member of the editorial board of *Filmicon: Journal of Greek Film Studies*. As of 2018, Psaras is Cultural Counsellor at the Cyprus High Commission in London.



To Watch the Creative Documentary, follow this link:

<https://vimeo.com/232222765?fbclid=IwAR0-8c3kjr0eVANKiQbINBptFNJsJ6MC5XH3D>

5 MAY



Rosy's Formula

Gallant apple cheeks shape
and shade his face,
lips like cherries and hands
like fresh cream,
a seamstress's fingers.

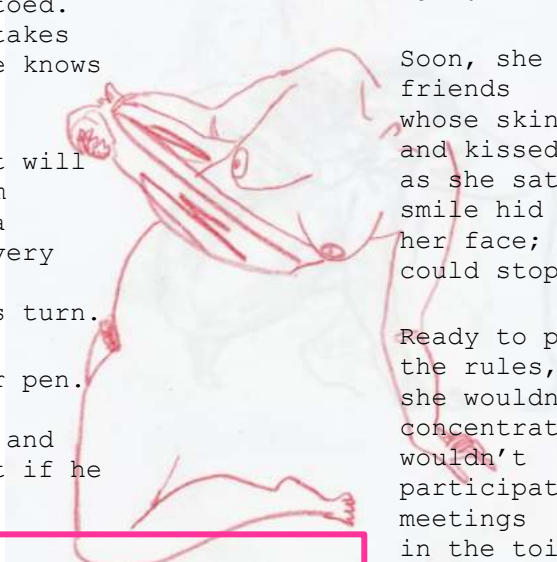
He knows what will happen
when he raises his hand,
that I'll smile and nod
towards the board.
He will shift from his seat

and make his way to the
calmer end of the room,
led by the sway of his hips.
His gentleman wrists
will curl in on themselves

as if holding an umbrella,
his footsteps pigeon-toed.
In the 30 seconds it takes
to reach the board, he knows
elbows will be nudged

and his thumping chest will
be drowned in a stream
of sniggers. There's a
flickering light in every
class
and this year it's his turn.

I pass over the marker pen.
Hunched, unshelled,
he embroiders letters and
numbers. They must fit if he
is to live his dream.



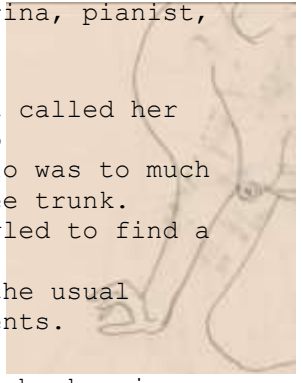
Zoe Pionides was raised in a Midlands chippy and now lives in Larnaca. Her first poem appeared on a square of greaseproof paper. Since then, she has been commended in UK competitions and received writing/editing commissions. Published work includes a communal novel: 'Payback' based on the Cyprus haircut crisis, and poems in various anthologies.

Iza

She hated Isabella -

'Don't call me that,'
she'd say.

It was too much of
what she wasn't -
a ballerina, pianist,
flowers.



I almost called her
Izabello
but bello was too much
of a tree trunk.
I struggled to find a
name
or use the usual
endearments.

She was chunky, jeans
devouring
checked shirts, her
hair cropped
shorter each week as
though
she were learning to
walk.

Soon, she found new
friends
whose skin she stroked
and kissed
as she sat up close. A
smile hid
her face; nothing
could stop her.

Ready to play with all
the rules,
she wouldn't
concentrate -
wouldn't
participate. She held
meetings
in the toilets, on the
benches,

hugged behind the
labs, immune
to guidance, warnings,
offers of help.
She left suddenly,
Isabella no more.
I wish I'd called her
Iza.

We Sail in Love

We sail in love
moving within and between,
whispering *aşk* breathlessly,
passing into englishes as though
it reads
like ask
aşk, ask, aaaaask
but asking what?

deliberating over *αγάπη*
missing
mistranslated into *agape*
a gaping what?
a gape where our love should be?
the voiced velar fricative unpronounceable,
the throat unmade for such sounds.
Classicists try dissecting the past;
we cry failing to find a future
filling in the gaps of the present
sailing in sounds
mournfully late
for a love
we can never translate.

The mouth is closed.

Daniele Nunziata is a poet and a lecturer in English Literature University of Oxford. He is the author of *Colonial and Postcolonial Cyprus: Transportal Literatures of Empire, Nationalism, and Sectarianism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). He has written several journal articles on postcolonial literatures. As a poet, his words often draw on his familial connections to Cyprus and his upbringing in London. He performs his poetry live and has been published in various international magazines.

Cocaine God

Anthony Anaxagorou
from After the Formalities

you remember how it went
at the Christmas party -

I felt so man when she asked me to dance

keeping her close like the papers
I'd bring you

our bodies steady releasing music
hard loafers red-faced & my girl so make-believe

me dancing like that so feline
so vague the largeness of a man
the smallness of a boy

what was guiding us then?
a thirst a sorrow the world?

you directing mum so yes so river
provoking her feet into space
water pulled how kitchen is the dance?
how bedroom can it get? her look
exultant your expression
the latest technology owning the floor
heavy smoke disco ball for your dips
perfume skidding on breath eyes here
then there you watching how i stirred
my girl your son so deer so calf my dad
made of headlight pure petroleum another powder
the history of your head rocking mine
head-butting me clean brick on butter

the way i went spinach leaf on steam
picking pink from off the floor & why
her moisturised knee the holy hills of her dress
crouching sequins guiding me to my feet
double-eyed with music throbbing

& you dad grinning like a bucket's handle
breathing in your body bullying what endured
your tiny feet tighter than a boxer's lace
& mum moving less like water now
More like tar

at the table my girl handed me a beer
as if it were the end of an agonising crossword
while the rest of us watched you force yourself
into each song
returning the years the light

bursting through us all black
as the smoke of burning swans

Anthony Anaxagorou is a British-born Cypriot poet, fiction writer, essayist, publisher and poetry educator. In 2015 he won the Groucho Maverick Award and was shortlisted for the Hospital Club H-100 Award for most influential people in writing and publishing. In 2019 he was made an honorary fellow of the University of Roehampton.

mekong' da üçüncü cins'in son 24 saati

sabahın altısında mekong köpürerek akmakta,
üçüncü cins'in ayakları altında.

feni:
çin'deki ipek böcekleri hiç yaratmadı böyle şaheser.

yunan tanrıları baştan çıkaracak kadar şehvetli,
şeytanı kskandıracak kadar günaha davet edici.

rüzgar, gel yer değiştirilm seninle
senin yerine ben işleyeyim onun illiklerine

dokunulmamışımı teslim etsem ona
o da günahlarını emanet etse bana

mekong uykuya dalmış, gece ne de olsa
üçüncü cins'in buharı gemi güvertesinde ruhu coşmakta

sahneleniyor üç uyanıklar oyunu
in cin alkışlıyor buharları, beni, onu

gökyüzünde parlayan yıldızlar misal
kaybetseydi keşke varlığının bilincini

-47-

bilekteki damarlar, buluşuyor asil jilette
şeytanın intihar çağrısı, tek perdelek tragedya sunuyor meleklerle.

sessizce açılıyor sağ bileğinde eğri bir yara,
son basamakta, artık mozozist o tam anlamıyla

yaranın açılmasıyla, kanın fışkırması arasındaki o meşum an
platonik aldanmalar önemsiz artık, boşalacak kan

beden, acıyla uğurlarken kanları
ehemmiyetsizlik var bilinçte, sıfır pozitif, ne de olsa bulunur her
yerde

susuyor martılar duymak için
yere damlayan kanın sesini

ihliyacısı yok ne kimliğe ne cana
kan gerekmez ruha

mamafih yine de ağlıyor uğurlarken kanını
ne de olsa yirmi yıllık alışkanlığı

ay, izleyici, gözyaşıyla kanı damlıyor suya
ay, artık daha kırmızı doğacak mekong' da

-48-

sabaha karşı beş sularında, üçüncü cins atıyor hoyratça
kullanılmış bedenini mekong'un serin sularına

onu aç gözlü sular kucaklıyor
son masumiyeti böylece alınıyor

doğum sancısıyla başlayan acı
yeniliyor ölüm sancısına

kim demiş sağ ve tam doğmak yeterli kişiliğe
gitmişken daha iyi bir beden bulmalı kendine

hırsızlar çalmış ipek elbiselerini
tek kalan güvertede jilette iskarpinleri

satılık bedenini bir daha gören olmamış
son sevişen onunla mekong sularınıymış

içmeyin artık su
günahkardır sular
en az üçüncü cins kadar.

-49-

Last 24 hours of the third gender in mekong

Translated by Bahriye Kemal
From *cin seli*, 2004. (Flood of Gin)

In memory of Geisha

at 6 in the morning mekong is furiously flowing,
under the third gender's feet.

skin:
china's silkworms have never created such a masterpiece.

so lustful that they seduce ancient greek gods,
invites sin to such an extent that make the devil jealous

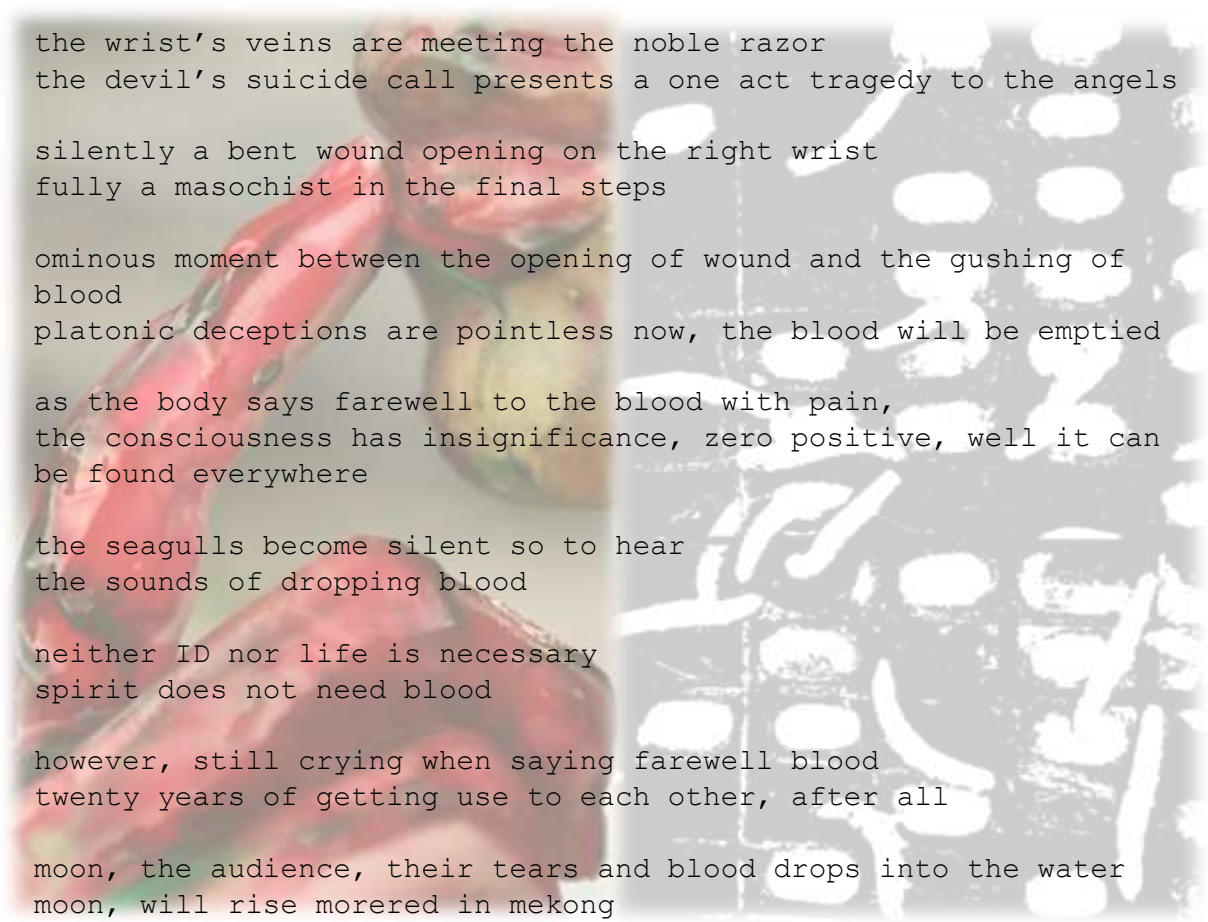
wind, come let's swap places with you
instead of you, let me touch their marrow

surrender my untouchability to them
so they can entrust their sins to me

mekong has fallen asleep, well it's night
the third gender's spirit is overjoyed on the steamy ship's deck

the three cunning play is being staged
emptiness is applauding the steam, me, them

like the stars shining in the sky
wish they would have lost their existence's consciousness



the wrist's veins are meeting the noble razor
the devil's suicide call presents a one act tragedy to the angels

silently a bent wound opening on the right wrist
fully a masochist in the final steps

ominous moment between the opening of wound and the gushing of
blood
platonic deceptions are pointless now, the blood will be emptied

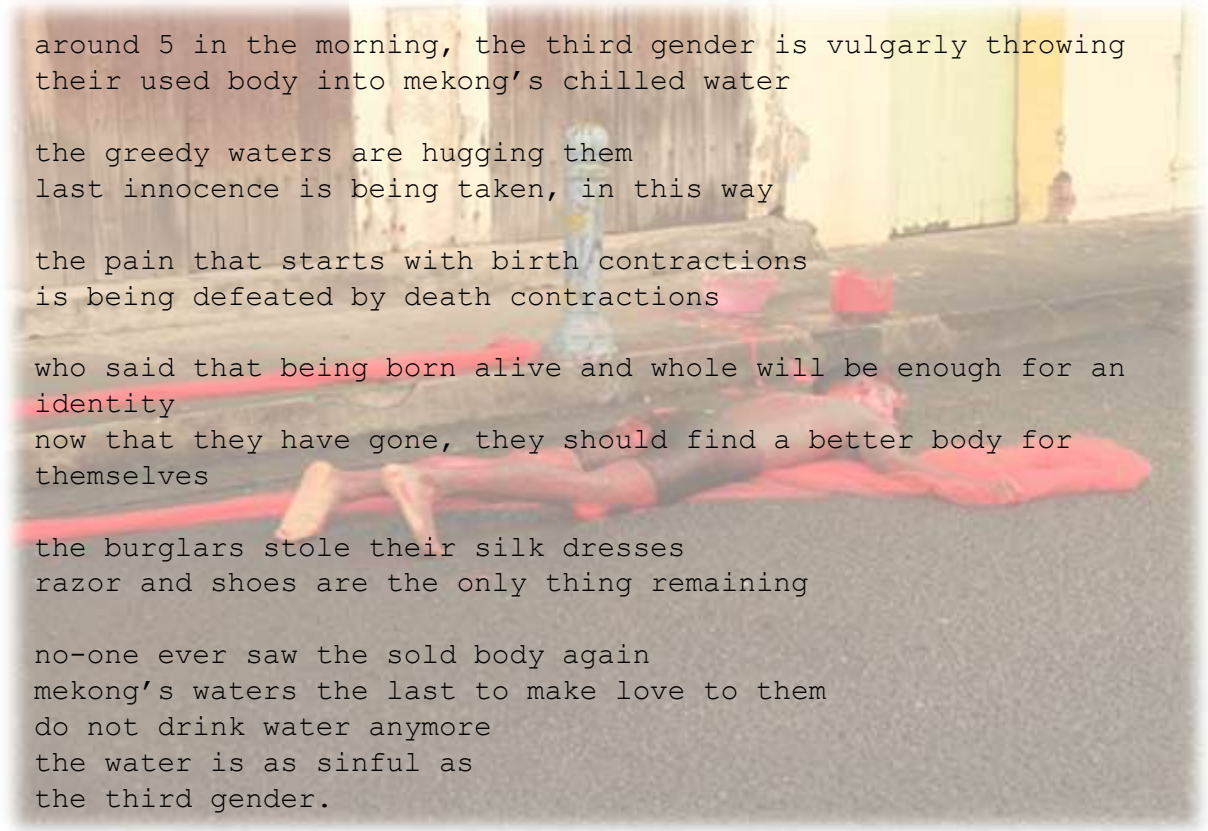
as the body says farewell to the blood with pain,
the consciousness has insignificance, zero positive, well it can
be found everywhere

the seagulls become silent so to hear
the sounds of dropping blood

neither ID nor life is necessary
spirit does not need blood

however, still crying when saying farewell blood
twenty years of getting use to each other, after all

moon, the audience, their tears and blood drops into the water
moon, will rise morered in mekong



around 5 in the morning, the third gender is vulgarly throwing
their used body into mekong's chilled water

the greedy waters are hugging them
last innocence is being taken, in this way

the pain that starts with birth contractions
is being defeated by death contractions

who said that being born alive and whole will be enough for an
identity

now that they have gone, they should find a better body for
themselves

the burglars stole their silk dresses
razor and shoes are the only thing remaining

no-one ever saw the sold body again
mekong's waters the last to make love to them
do not drink water anymore
the water is as sinful as
the third gender.

Gürkan Uluçhan, is a poet, novelist, short story and script writer. Born in Lefkoşa, Gürkan studied Law at Marmara University. Some published works include: *Cin Seli/ Flood of Gin* (Poetry), *Ahna Kitabı /The Book of Ahna* (Novella), *Zamanın Aşkı / Love of the Times* (short story), *Keçiboynuzu / Craob* (novel), *Korkunç Üçlü/ The Scary Threesome* (novel) ve *Medusa* (poetry). In 2004 the short story *Akıl hastanesi / mental asylum* won the Emaa 1. Young Story Writers award, in 2012 the short story *Peştemalin bir günü/ Pestamailin's day* won the Defne Dergisi V. Short Story Competition sponsored by Tourism, Environment and Cultural Ministry, in 2013 the short story *Morgue Sokağı'ndaki morgda yaşananlar/ those aging in the morgue on Morgue street*; was mentioned in *FABİSAD, GİO. Ahna Kitabı/The Book of Ahna* has been translated into many languages and is taught in schools across Cyprus and America.

susuyor martılar duymak için
yere damlayan kanın sesini

ihfiyacı yok ne kimliğe ne cana
kan gerekmez ruha

mamalih yine de ağlıyor uğurlarken kanını
ne de olsa yirmi yıllık alışkanlığı

ay, lileyici, gözyaşıyla kanı damlıyor suya
ay, artık daha kırmızı doğacak mekong' da

Every night you have the same dream. At 3 o'clock in the morning; that you are becoming a woman. Every night you dream of becoming a woman.

In your dreams you went to Arif's funeral, you dressed in black, you put the black scarf, you covered your hair, in your dreams, it was a dream, a dream a dream a dream, you crossed the barricades, you ran in the old city, you ran wearing the black high heels he loved, taka-taka-taka at the cobbled street, taka-taka-taka, you running in the cobbled street thinking of him, becoming beautiful for him, becoming beautiful to go to his funeral, to go to the mosque to see, to honor him, wearing black, covering your hair, becoming beautiful just to see him.

Red Lefkosa Dreams

CONSTANTIA SOTERIOU



They did not let you in, they did not let you see, they pushed you back at the mosque, you heard the imam chanted for him, you saw the green prayers rising, you saw them looking at you, staring at you, what is this Rum[i] woman doing here, what is this beauty doing here, here at the Turkish side, here, and you, pretending that you do not understand, pretending that you do not hear, pretending that this is not you, you went there in your dream, you dreamt that you went to his funeral, you went to his funeral dressed as a woman, in your dream, you went as a woman, you coward, you crook, you bastard, you dreamt that you were at his funeral, you went there only in your dream.

Every night you have the same dream. At 3 o'clock in the morning; that you are becoming a woman. Every night you dream of becoming a woman. Every night at 3 o'clock in the morning you are a woman.

Your eldest nanny, the great great grandmother, was the dünya güzeli[ii], was the most beautiful woman in the whole world, they called her Fairy, she was loved by a man called Hasan. He went to find her, to take her, I will take her, he said, I will take you, you will become mine. She did not want to, she did not want to go, she could not change who she was. Listen, she said, let them fight! Your Allah and my Christ. Let them fight. Let's see who will win. So you can have me. So you can lose me. Let them fight. This is what she said. They fought for days, her Christ and his Allah, they fought for months and years. The Christ got tired, he was about to lose the battle. The Fairy got scared, Hasan got sad. The Gods felt bad, the Gods felt miserable. Give hands, Hasan said. Give hands. The Gods gave hands, Hasan became a Christian. But he promised Allah to give him a piece of his penis to God. He promised to give a piece of every male son to Allah. This is why they circumcise all the males in your family. You gave a piece of your penis to Allah. This is how the story happened, this is what the great great grandmother said, this is what the Fairy asked. This is how the Gods won.



Constantia Soteriou was born in Nicosia. Her first book, Aishe Goes on Vacation, won the Athens Prize for Literature in 2016 and was shortlisted for the Greece National Book Awards. Voices Made of Soil, her second novel, was shortlisted for the Cyprus National Book Awards/ She writes plays for the Cyprus Theatre Organisation, amongst others, and has had numerous short stories published in anthologies and Greek and Cypriot literature magazines.

You decided not to sleep, ever, at nights. Never. Again.

"You need an onion, you cut it in small pieces you fry it a bit, you wait. You take two red tomatoes, you put in the pan, you stir, you wait. You put your bulgur, you stir, you put the water, you stir, you wait. You put it away of the fire, you put your salt, you say the spell, you spit, you stir you wait. You wait. You cover the pan with a red scarf. It has to be red. A red scarf. You wait. You have to wait. Wait. Serve him, say the spell, say the magic words, tell the God, ask the God, make him love me. Make him love me. Make him Love me. He will love you. He will love you. He will love you".

A tried and trusted recipe Emine Abbla[iii] gave your aunt Maria. You are doing something wrong. You are missing some ingredients. Nobody loved you. Ever.

Every night you have the same dream. At 3 o'clock in the morning; that you are becoming a woman. Every night you dream of becoming a woman. You feel it while sleeping, you are changing, you are becoming her, your hands are thinner, your nails are red, hair are growing in your head, your breasts are pulsing. You are emasculating. Every night, at 3 o'clock in the morning; every single night at 3 in the morning. This is how you dream. This your Lefkoşa dream. This is a coward's dream at 3 o'clock in the morning.

Irene Kattou (b. 2000) is a multimedia artist. Her work explores the relationship of the body, culture and the embodiment experience. Focusing on aesthetics, these ideas became important elements within her practice. Using surrealist influences, she seeks to investigate and destabilise narratives of 'truth' by making her audience uneasy. Her works actively encourage raptures of subversion to dominant notions. Her politically charged and daring photo *Eat Me* was featured on the Sex Issue of Phi Magazine. In the exhibition *Cyprus Queer Perspectives*, she explored the emotional turmoil of the queer person.




**A Rainbow
of
Emotions**

Irene Kattou

**Acrylics on
rice paper**

29.6 X 42 cm
each

 **body.art_I (SOLD)** The creation of this body of work was a catharsis. I often wish queer lives were as glamorous and happy like the rainbow flag lgbt+ people use. The truth is queer lives are almost always a constant battle for existence and acceptance. There is a lot of fear and anger we deal with, from our interpersonal and family relationships, to how will strangers treat and respond to us. The legal and societal barriers are often a dark cloud in our mind. We grow up in constant alienation of being the 'other'. We crave for understanding and sympathy. But there is a unique sense of family and beauty in being queer in cyprus.

And this exactly is the juxtaposition my paintings are trying to depict. The uncertainty, the fusion of sadness with the happier moments. Although we can see the brighter side of life, some negative things still haunt and follow us. We are far from the ideal society and equality. The shame that takes years to brush off your shoulders, the bullying, the traumas, the fear of loneliness. They shape you and stay with you. I wish I could be optimistic about the future all the time, but it is not easy. To move on, you must marry the night.

(Art work from the private collection of Evagoras Vryonides)

Be You, Be Venus

The gaze of [p/g/b]ushing shrubs, slender the mind

Slender the mind to think about being binary and non-binary.

Crowds of men gazing into the beauty of men, women, trans-men, trans-women, lesbians and gays.

What do we see when we look at a person, beauty or binary labels?



Shadows and Reflections is about how someone perceives the world, how we see and interpret things when we feel alone, and mental state of mind. Its more about reverting to the lifestyle you had and the way you see shadows and reflection of your past.

Shadows and Reflections

Photography Exhibition by Kemal G Kemal

Venuses are rising,
Look left, right, look ahead
Venuses are rising.

Look into the eyes of your Venus, be brave,
do not be scared to hold your Venus, while
other people stare hate.



Being you, being straight, being trans, being gay, being lesbian, and being a dyke? Who cares what they say, love your Venus, ward off evil.

Venus is the unattainable and most gifted example of how to express yourself.

Be you, be anyone, but don't be a-someone who tags along.

Kemal Kemal is a photographer. He completed a BA in Photography at London Metropolitan University. Kemal's artwork engages with social issues by focusing on the role water and reflection play in understanding memory, the meditative state of mind, and data, all inspired by the myth of hermaphrodite. The exhibition *Shadows and Reflections* (2018) was shown at The Hellenic Centre and their most recent work is *A Conversation with Water* (2020).



Stavros Stavrou

Karayanni

is creative writer and associate professor of English in the Department of Humanities at the European University Cyprus

GARDENING DESIRE

Ali Ejaz hummed tunes familiar from Bollywood. His handsome voice was hesitant, tentative, but intent on making itself heard in the darkling spring air of Nicosia's Parliament Park. The evening breeze carried his song across the parterres, over the hedges, brushed it along the thorny edges of the cactus shoots, and lifted it all the way through the rich rustling foliage of the giant eucalyptus. As dusk began to descend, the shadows in the park multiplied, offering refuge to anxious promises. I approached, fully in love with the idea of his dark complexion against the settling evening, and traced the lines of his face inquiringly and longingly, happily settling on eyes, bright with a smile that rested within the lines on the sides and on his mouth - full lips and always ready for a smile. These encounters, at once magical and devastating; not knowing what to relish foremost, the pungent flesh, the skin that mixes strong aftershave with cigarette smoke - a scent that to me breathes the most concentrated excess of sexual longing. On our way through the park and out of the gate, the euphoria from my fulfilment evoked a desire in me to offer something from another dimension, I wanted to give him something as a token of how I loved him at that

moment, but all I had to give was my name, as if this could be an offering, a humble gift of sorts. 'Ali Ejaz,' he replied.

The Nicosia Municipal Gardens is a serene and pleasant park, the legacy of British colonial rule. For more than a century it has existed across from the Nicosia General Hospital (now demolished) just outside the city's sixteenth-century Venetian wall, its east side facing the Paphos Gate. The Parliament building, on the south side, adorns the colonial legacy with the premises of the esteemed and venerable legislative body of the Republic of Cyprus, and assigns its label: Parliament Park. Its other names, however, are much more alluring and even offer a tour of the political history of Cyprus: the British called it, rather surprisingly, Victoria Memorial Gardens. More recently, Asian migrants, whose personal histories are inherently connected with the same colonial narrative, refer to

it as Cyta Park (the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority being the biggest telecommunication company active in the island), a name that acknowledges the island's corporate accomplishments gone awry in March 2013 when Laiki Bank, one of the Republic's biggest banks, collapsed. And, in light of the developments of the last few years, Garden of Peace is the name that

marks the ever so slight shifts in the nationalist narratives that have ensured that the island's wounds are kept open.

Yet, the most appealing name is one that I remember from my childhood and that associates the park with its benefactor, Princess Zena Gunther de Tyras, whose financial support, along with the architectural plans of Neoptolemos Michaelides, engendered the landscaping that we have inherited today, even though its appearance must be quite different from the early 60s when Michaelides set about re-designing it. What an extraordinary stroke of camp fortune that this park would be associated with a princess whose life story reveals a bruised femininity that is so appealing to men conscious of their compromised masculinity. Zena Gunther, a Tala-born girl, in the province of Paphos, and a Limassol cabaret dancer who married the heir of the Gunther family and came into extraordinary wealth, in order to, among many other things, restore a park, give it her name and establish a meeting point for men who engage in an active negotiation with the norms of masculine behaviour and masculine power, and, more importantly, the uses of pleasure on the landscape of the male body made possible by the landscape of the garden.

I used to visit this park when I was a little boy. Yet, memory works in striking ways. It is not merely a passive repository but an active catalytic building experience, shaping the imaginative

landscape that processes our lives. I still remember the feeling of going to this park to admire the aviary (I loved animals, birds, serpents and always sought opportunities for contact), but an even greater impression was created by those men who walked around the park or sat on the benches looking forlorn but insistently present and queerly purposeful. I looked with curiosity and fascination as if I could fathom their extraordinary purpose despite my young age and lack of sexual experience.

How much of what we remember is actual memory and how much is projection of subsequent thoughts and experiences modelled on vague recollections without solid references? Did I really know what those men looked for in the park or did I apply this knowledge in retrospect? Whatever the case, years later when I found myself an adult sitting on those benches observing in wait, my imaginative point of reference became those male figures that traversed the late morning shadows of my childhood, the present experience constructed on those shadowy foundations. My heartbeat in my mouth that first time I cruised in this park of Nicosia. I was seventeen, insecure and unknowing but persistent and inquisitive, and I relished with great guilt, shame, but also elation the bizarre pleasure as the electric charge of sex surged in my youthful body. As if in supplication, the unknown man, who was much older than I was at the time, knelt before me with tenderness and appreciation. I think back on

that first experience with great fondness even though it really wasn't much in terms of sexual adventure. Rather, it was an unceremonious initiation to the mysteries of cruising, but sufficient for me to taste pleasure and sense the intoxication of a proscribed exchange whose contours I had already traced in the mysterious area that lies beyond the known frames of verbal reference.

'Where should we go?' he whispered as we walked away from the bench where he had been sitting surveying the desiring human traffic as it shadowed its way through the park.

'Well', I replied, 'the choices are rather limited: there is Hedge A on our right, Hedge B on our left, a shrub further up, and the dark parking lot across the street.' Decisions are taken quickly at these moments and soon we were both headed towards my car parked in the dark parking lot across the street from Parliament Park. Once inside he wasted no time lowering the seat and lying back in a relaxed position offering himself in a way that was attractive and inviting, unlike the typical macho attitude that determines the motion of such poses, favourite with straight-identified men who expect to be 'serviced' slavishly. On our initial exchange I felt a certain sweetness about him. He had a rare disposition of knowing what he wanted and the confidence to request it in a manner that incited my desire. Yes, apart from his appealing looks, it was the way he composed our love encounter that charmed me. I was so

taken by the wonderful way he offered himself and was quite shocked that he lingered for a short while after so as to share a little about himself. When we parted, I walked away thinking about how this man came along to love me on this dark, cool October night, adding texture to my life and leaving me with a lingering taste of desire in my mouth. Reaching the traffic lights of Strovolos Avenue, I observed as if in a trance, the lights of cars gliding up and down the busy crossroads staring with their bright and unwavering intentness. My mouth felt those pathways crafted by his presence, sadly tracing the absence. And I caressed the seat beside me and brought my hand to my nose several times, like the stray cat that frequents my mother's backyard and who comes and sniffs my car tyres deciphering with intentness smells that registered and travelled on that spot. His strong body smell is, in fact, what I found most overpowering. What is it about a lover's smell that lingers in your nostrils and you inhale it like a precious narcotic relishing it as if it will induce that state of ecstasy again or make the sensation of that body recur? And the cars kept gliding around me in all directions it seemed - as if each one of them was carrying him but forbidding me to have him, goading me as this insufferable absence enveloped me.

There are many remarkable things to observe about cruising encounters, however furtive, secretive and evanescent they may be. Almost

every time, despite the darkness, and sometimes even the wordless character of the exchange, important attributes may become apparent. Proximity is enough to offer some imitation of the world that the stranger's body inhabits: bespeak compatibility or otherwise. All it takes is a shadow, a hurried or languid movement in the dark, a pause and a process. And what you perceive often allows your imagination to take you on these journeys that awaken secret desires and evoke that hunger for sensation. As if caught unaware, even though it is there for the purpose, the body rises to the pleasure of looking and welcomes the surge of emotive synaesthesia.

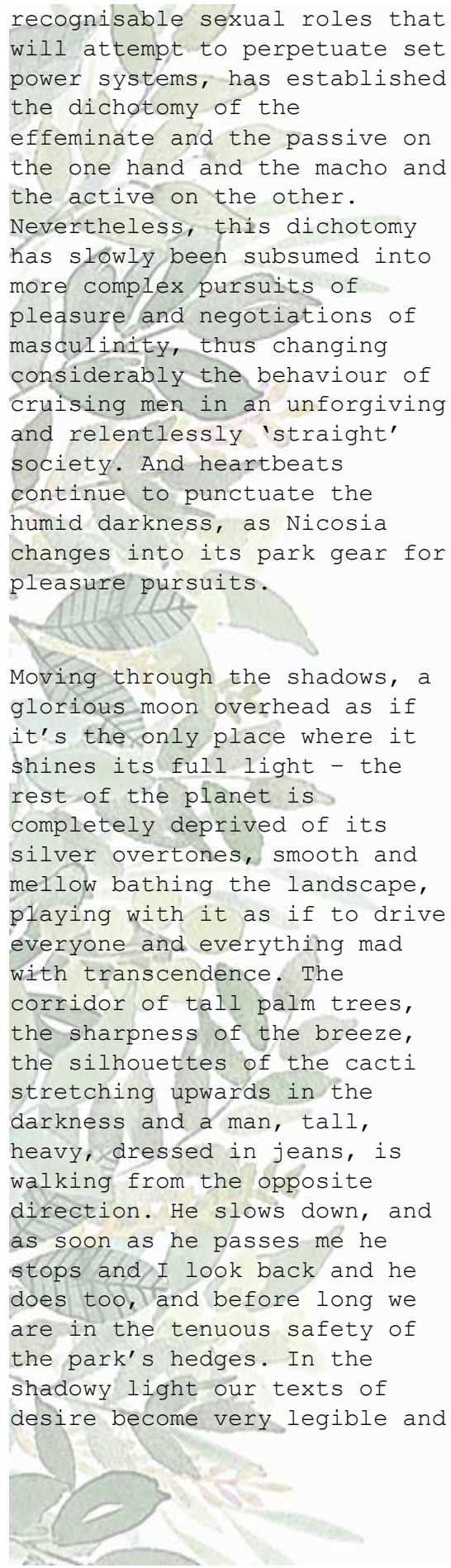
At present the cruising scene in Nicosia has seen further developments. Since April 2003 the line of separation between Northern and Southern parts of the island could be crossed for the first time in twenty-nine years. Inevitably,

some of the Greek Cypriots began to cruise in Northern Cyprus, and Turkish Cypriots ventured to the parks and parking lots in the south. Meetings and sexual encounters between gay men of the two communities have seen the materialization of what used to be an old fantasy of compromising contact between the infidel and the religiously devout; the insolent and the refined. Dissident desire (gay, lesbian and so much more) often wants to transcend the oppressive boundaries of dominant narratives, and shows greater willingness to cross borders and defy prejudice. Yet, dissidence does not always presume innocence and lack of

prejudice. The manner in which a Greek Cypriot man will approach a Turkish Cypriot man for sex during cruising will be in negotiation with nationalist indoctrination and the long and systematic cultivation of hatred.

Apart from Turkish Cypriots, Nicosia cruising has seen the appearance of immigrants looking for sex for pleasure and/or money. In the eighties, the only non-Greek Cypriot one might see would be Lebanese fleeing from the civil war. Now there are ethnic Greeks from the Black Sea region, African asylum seekers, South Asian migrant workers, Western Europeans working in offshore companies, and men from Eastern Europe. Without access to internet chat lines, and because cruising in person is the only way to find other men, these men have reintroduced into cruising some of the pulse that was usurped by on-line meeting sites.

The park with many names, just on the outskirts of the Venetian walls of a city torn apart by violence, occasions reflections on colonial and postcolonial historical moments, migration, global sexual developments and shifts in sexual attitudes in Cypriot society. The vegetation itself has suffered greatly in recent years. A systematic effort to eliminate all possible hiding places has left the park bereft of hedges, bushes, climbers. The trees have grown much taller but the park has never looked so bare. And the behaviour has also seen shifts. Patriarchy, with its dependence on easily



recognisable sexual roles that will attempt to perpetuate set power systems, has established the dichotomy of the effeminate and the passive on the one hand and the macho and the active on the other. Nevertheless, this dichotomy has slowly been subsumed into more complex pursuits of pleasure and negotiations of masculinity, thus changing considerably the behaviour of cruising men in an unforgiving and relentlessly 'straight' society. And heartbeats continue to punctuate the humid darkness, as Nicosia changes into its park gear for pleasure pursuits.

Moving through the shadows, a glorious moon overhead as if it's the only place where it shines its full light - the rest of the planet is completely deprived of its silver overtones, smooth and mellow bathing the landscape, playing with it as if to drive everyone and everything mad with transcendence. The corridor of tall palm trees, the sharpness of the breeze, the silhouettes of the cacti stretching upwards in the darkness and a man, tall, heavy, dressed in jeans, is walking from the opposite direction. He slows down, and as soon as he passes me he stops and I look back and he does too, and before long we are in the tenuous safety of the park's hedges. In the shadowy light our texts of desire become very legible and

we begin to read them to each other, tentatively and haltingly at first. Steadily, however, the reading gains in devotion and tenor. Soon we begin to apply our lips to words, to whole sentences, and we traverse the textual passages hungrily, passionately. We take each other's words and turn them around in our mouths, tasting their every edge, tracing their pulse, their heat, their texture. There gardening desire is no stopping this articulation; so full of ardour, so adroit, and happening against the backdrop of his smell: it reminded me of my aunt's courtyard in her old, now demolished house where I used to play with my cousins in a childhood of smells that blended wet earth, oleander, basil and bay leaf, bitter and sweet and pungent. And when we finished our passages, we put our texts away and parted, feigning a certain nonchalance about the anxious moment of saying goodnight. And I walk on through the bushes, up the path, through the side entrance, across the empty street and finally onto busy Egypt Avenue. My head is immersed in the effort to control the flow of what I still can't identify but which I know flows from a certain point on the landscape of my memory, as if his desire reached out and stroked that point and probed it until this energy burst forth and danced around me, ineluctable, wounding, and unregenerate.

RAINBOW

Rainbow Children

A narrative about a sweet kid. With big beautiful black eyes. He was writing a novel set in the Greek islands. He'd never been there, but knew it like he'd wandered the streets. We'd meet and chat at the bookstore I often visit. It was obvious that he was different. I felt hidden stories in his eyes and waves of sorrow in their soul.

I had no doubts about their sexual identity. Even if he didn't say it, it was understood. One day I said something along the lines of "how great would it be not to drive in this Cyprus; instead be gay, be lesbian, you will be less discriminated" he laughed. This must have encouraged him; he pulled me into a corner and told me his secret, which I had already realized: "You know, I'm gay" he said. I said "I know". "Is it too obvious?" he asked. Then he began to tell his story: as the child of a very conservative Sunni family in Turkey, he has struggled with carrying this identity. He had fallen in love with a Greek he met online, saying "Pure, pure, deep love." He wanted to see his lover, but could not go. If he jumped on a ship from the city he lived in, he would arrive on the island. So he begged his father to help him leave, of course, without explaining why he wanted it so badly. But it was not possible.

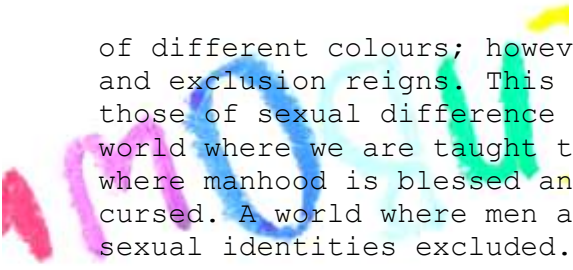
Heterosexuality is the other of the dominant world

He had learned Greek by himself. With the wings given by love, he could almost fly over to the country of the beloved. He had learned many things and thanks to them he felt close to him. He was in the arms of the forbidden, the wrong. "Doubled" the taboos with his lover. He was the other of this heterosexual world that dominates. He chose his lover from the "ethnic other". His love was an objection against the contempt and rejection of difference. He hated his home and family. His father's treatment of his mother, his attitude towards women. He could come out to his family. He was very different from their world.

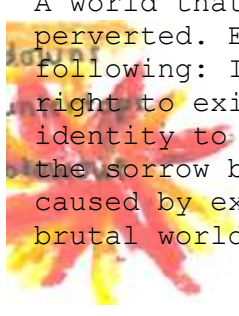
Those who were interested in their own kind and in love with someone of their own kind were cursed. It scared them. They were considered strange. Getting close to each other was a crime that broke the law. As if they didn't exist; they were treated like they could not exist. His father often uttered vulgar words about those who looked like him. When I was at a writers' house in his town last summer, I called him. His bright black eyes were full of concern. In this house, he knew right away that it was another world. He was welcomed. Difference was beauty.

A world where manhood is blessed

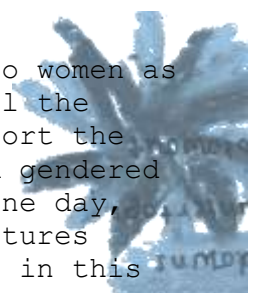
I think he was happy too. His sexual identity was just one of his multiple identities. Today, in many parts of the world, in homes, small towns and in many public places, people like him are excluded and suffering. The world is a brutal conflict zone for those with different ethnic, sexual and class identities. In European cities they are not as visible as foreigners and people



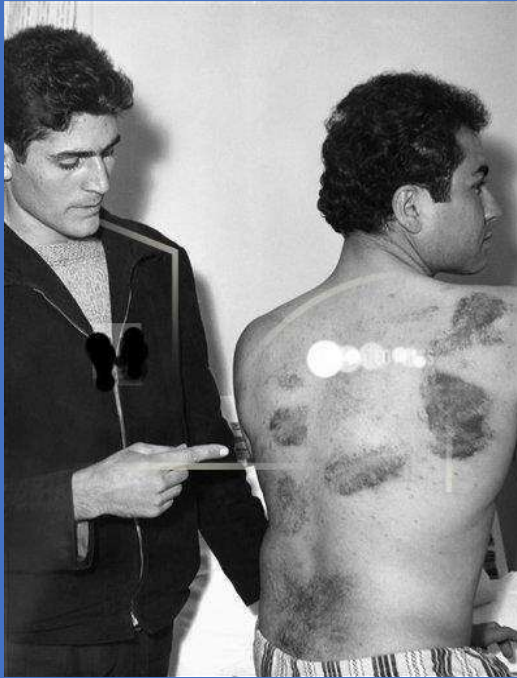
of different colours; however, when they expose themselves hatred and exclusion reigns. This terrible fragility experienced by those of sexual difference brings hell to the world. It's not a world where we are taught to love difference. This is a world where manhood is blessed and everyone who leaves his path is cursed. A world where men are at the centre, and women and other sexual identities excluded.



A world that judges the love of men to men and women to women as perverted. Even though this is the case **for** now, I feel the following: If we increase the numbers of those who support the right to exist in difference, right of every sexual and gendered identity to exist in equality and harmony, then maybe one day, the sorrow buried in the sparkling black eyes, the fractures caused by exclusion, and the cruelty of making everyone in this brutal world look like everyone else, will also disappear.



Queer Singer Beats Homophobic Nationalism, Behiç Gökay
by Neşe Yaşın & Mete Hatay



A photograph of Behiç Gökay shared by Sotiris Savva,


Neşe Yaşın talks about Behiç Gökay: A Cypriot Queer

This is a story of Behiç Gökay, a singer beaten, marginalized, isolated and forgotten after his death. There is, however, consolation in how the villagers remember and speak of Behiç as a person full of love and respect.

Behiç was gay and refused to fight the Greeks, thereby defying local authorities. The police then subjected Behiç to beatings on several occasions. His brother, Alpay, who also refused to fight, took him to a doctor on the Greek side for medical treatment. The Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı/Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) accused Alpay of collaborating with the Greeks, and he was also beaten and then went missing. After this incident, fearing for his life Behiç re-settled in the south before heading to Athens where he began singing in taverns. When he got sick, he returned to Cyprus and lived in a Linobambaki village, in the southern part of Cyprus, where Turkish and Greek Cypriots continue to live together even after the division.

Facebook Entry on History, Homophobia and Nationalism in Cyprus

Met Hatay is a journalist and Senior Research Consultant in the Peace Research Institute Oslo Cyprus Centre. His research focuses primarily on Cyprus, where he has written widely on minorities and religion, the politics of demography, displacement, and cultural heritage.

 **Mete Hatay** is with Diomedes Koufteros and 5 others.

9 Sep 2019 · 🌐

You may know that in the goodwill framework agreed some time ago by the leaders the recordings of Behiç Gökay are among the RIK recordings that should be returned to the Turkish Cypriot side. Who is Behiç Gökay?

Five years ago when my dear friends Neşe Yaşın and Hüseyin Özinal asked me if I had any photos of Behiç Gökay in my archive I became interested in his story. I knew Behiç Gökay by name, and in fact his voice is still in my ear. Behiç Gökay was a gay singer who after events of 1963 took refuge in the Greek Cypriot side. He had a Greek Cypriot boy friend. TMT and the Turkish police first warned him several times not to go to the GC side, then beat and tortured him. Later, his older brother, who tried to protect him, would also be

tortured. Afterwards, the older brother would mysteriously be made to disappear.

He made his living mostly singing Zeki Müren songs (famous Turkish singer). During the same period, a number of homosexual singers were under the command of TMT and the leadership of the period, and they would give performances to raise morale. The songs that were sung were both entertaining and full of stories of heroism. One of these was a quite well-known song by Amet Becerikli that went, "Rauf Denkaş, Doktor Küçük, Osman Örek, three friends, brothers, brothers..."

After Gökay began to live in the Greek Cypriot side he was asked to do a program on RIK. He accepted and for many years had a weekly program on RIK through which he would try to reach the Turkish Cypriots struggling in the ghettos. Of course, the aim of the Greek Cypriot administration of the period was to use beloved artists such as Gökay to encourage Turkish Cypriots to listen to a RIK that had been turned into a propaganda machine for the GC administration. And they were successful in this. Despite the opposition of the Turkish Cypriot leadership, Turkish Cypriot displaced persons piled into the ghettos listened faithfully to Behiç Gökay's program.

Behiç Gökay was the grandson of the famous Turkish nationalist, Doctor Behiç, who had been executed for the crime of murder. He was one of the Turkish Cypriot elite that was held captive in the Kyrenia castle during the First World War. He was one of the island's three native doctors. He was executed in 1924 after killing his wife in a jealous rage. After this tragic event, there was even an epic poem written about the doctor, the "Doktor Behiç Epic."

Years later, his grandson Behiç Gökay sang for many years in tavernas on the Greek Cypriot side and had a Greek Cypriot lover. As I explained above, Sevgül Uludağ today published a photo of the marks of this beating in Yenidüzen. The ironic thing is that the only photo that we have of Behiç Gökay after years of searching is a photograph following his torture. We kindly ask any readers who have photographs of him to share them. After 1974, Gökay moved to Greece and continued his music there. In 1990, after being diagnosed with a serious illness, he returned to the island, and the Government gave him a house in Potamia. Not long after settling in the house, Gökay succumbed to his illness. Gökay's grave is in the Muslim cemetery in Potamia.

CHARITIES! CHARITIES! CHARITIES!

Accept Cyprus

AKT

Black Out Uk

Black Trans Foundation

Hidayah LGBT

**ILGA (International LGBTI
Association)**

Imaan London

The Kaleidoscope Trust

**Kuri Kibris Dernegi
(Queer Cyprus Association)**

Mermaids

The Outside Project

Pocadot

Say It

Switchboard LGBT+

<https://accept.cy/en/home/>

<https://www.akt.org.uk>

<https://blkoutuk.com/about/>

<https://linktr.ee/blacktransfoundation>

<https://www.hidayahlgbt.com>

<https://ilga.org>

<https://imaanlondon.wordpress.com>

<https://kaleidoscopetrust.com>

<https://www.queercyprus.org/en/about-queer-cyprus/>

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk>

<https://lgbtiqoutside.org>

<https://linktr.ee/pocadot>

<https://sayit.org.uk>

<https://switchboard.lgbt>



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