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HOUSED by CHOICE, HOUSED by FORCE - Homes, Conflicts and Conflicting Interests

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Displaced housing estates in Nicosia, Cyprus and the notion of conflict transformation through social art practices

2. Format: Conference Presentation and Written Paper

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5. University or Company Affiliation:

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6. Abstract (300 words):

The urban neighbourhoods of the Cypriot displaced state estates were built to re-house the internally displaced Greek Cypriots who were forced to leave their homes in northern Cyprus during the 1974 war. This low-cost state housing project was initially undertaken in 1976 with international aid and with the hope that it would only be a temporary solution following the conflict. At the start, because there were so many displaced people living in camps, construction was hurried; and the state even used ready made plans of UK council estates. These 'displaced persons' estates, originally built at the edges of the city next to industrial zones, have been ethnically charged spaces, as they have often been utilized by politicians as a reminder of war and a re-affirmation of ethno-national identity and collective remembrance. By creatively exploring these urban environments, whose socio-spatial geography is largely associated with lower economic social groups, a

process of reflection is enabled on how the conflict inherent in the city environment is interpreted through the relationships of its different social publics.

This paper is the result of an exploration of the use of art within these displaced housing estates, and it is related to a project which was comprised of a series of social art practice actions that took place in 2011-2012, and which utilized spaces within displaced housing estates. This project was part of a wider practice led PhD project- *Conflict Transformation Art: Practice Led Research examining the role of socially engaged art in resisting urban segregation, the case of Nicosia Cyprus*. The conflict transformation art framework, which was derived by exploring the notion of conflict, social contact and dialogue through art, also focuses on expanding our understanding of difference and how that is negotiated within the contemporary urban environment. By looking at elements of conflict, urban segregation and regeneration, self-organisation and social housing communities through the prism of socially engaged art practices, this paper will reflect on the notions of state housing, conflict and conflicting interests.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):

Evanthia Tselika [PhD] is a visual arts researcher, visual art producer and arts educator. She is assistant professor and programme coordinator of the Fine Art programme, University of Nicosia. Her practice led research is focused on the role of conflict in relation to socially engaged art practices within segregated urban contexts. She has extended research and practical experience in curatorial and pedagogical art practices and her work focuses on conflict related contemporary art practices, dialogical structures and socially engaged art practices, and contemporary methods of art pedagogy within the context of divided cities. She has worked, exhibited and collaborated with various galleries and museums in London, El Salvador, Cyprus, Greece, Mexico and Brazil, such as the Municipal Arts Centre in Nicosia, the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, October Gallery in London, the Modern Art Museum of El Salvador, and the Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil, amongst others.

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