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

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Living in Ubiquity and Uniformity: Communal Spaces Void of Conflict, Void of Meaning

2. Format: Written paper / Presentation

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6. Abstract (300 words):

In Cyprus, contemporary affordable housing, mostly led by developers, promises an antidote to the small spaces, small windows, lack of storage spaces and the reduction of common spaces to a circulatory minimal found in most contemporary residential blocks in urban environments. In Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean region, housing blocks for low income families, workers and refugees have been criticised in the past as stark, dehumanizing, universal, sterile and mechanistic, and were rendered responsible for many social problems, like social disintegration. This paper discusses the

design idioms and special conditions of mobility in Cyprus, and its aim is to study closer the architectural and social value of common spaces in housing projects located in challenged urban environments.

Unlike other Cypriot cities, Paphos spreads across two distinct geographic areas, which were developed in different chronological phases: the Paphos town centre, known as Ktima, which mainly includes the old town, and the new Paphos, which includes the newly established residential areas, as well as the seaport and popular archeological sites. The economy of the city has grown rapidly after 1974 and has been based on tourism and the construction sector mainly operating in Kato Paphos and the nearby areas. Similarly, in the last four decades, Cyprus has been transformed from an agrarian economy into an international provider of economic services. The impact of this change was severe, not only on the architectural quality of dwellings, but most importantly on the quality of the built environment. The distinction between the old town and the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Kato Paphos, the social and spatial coherence of which is currently challenged by unplanned touristic developments, has created a sharp division in the city that is also reflected in their inhabitants' demographics, with local residents living in the old town and tourists being secluded in the sea front.

In this context, the paper presents cases of housing developments in Paphos that are characterised by *ubiquity* and *uniformity,* as they are designed and built to attract an audience as wide as possible, and discusses how *universal* design preferences are applied in practice ignoring the social and cultural sustainability of the city as a whole and without respecting the identity of the place.

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

Giorgos Artopoulos is Associate Research Scientist at the Cyprus Institute, Nicosia. He holds a Master of Philosophy in Architecture and the Moving Image (University of Cambridge, UK, 2004) and a PhD, conducted at the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge (2005-2010) with a Doctoral Award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, where he assisted as tutor and Research Assistant. Giorgos has contributed in 12 European Research Programs, and his work was published in more than 23 peer-reviewed journals and books of architecture and 35 International Conference proceedings and exhibition catalogues and presented in more than 29 International Conferences and exhibitions.

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written 20 articles in peer-reviewed journals and collective volumes. As an architect he has designed more than 30 residential buildings, while as an urban planner he contributed in 10 Greek and European Research Programs.

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