AN ATLAS OF ATHENIAN INSCRIPTIONS

A Book Of Drawings Of Writings And Writings On Drawings

Konstantinos Avramidis

PhD in Architecture by Design
University of Edinburgh | 2017

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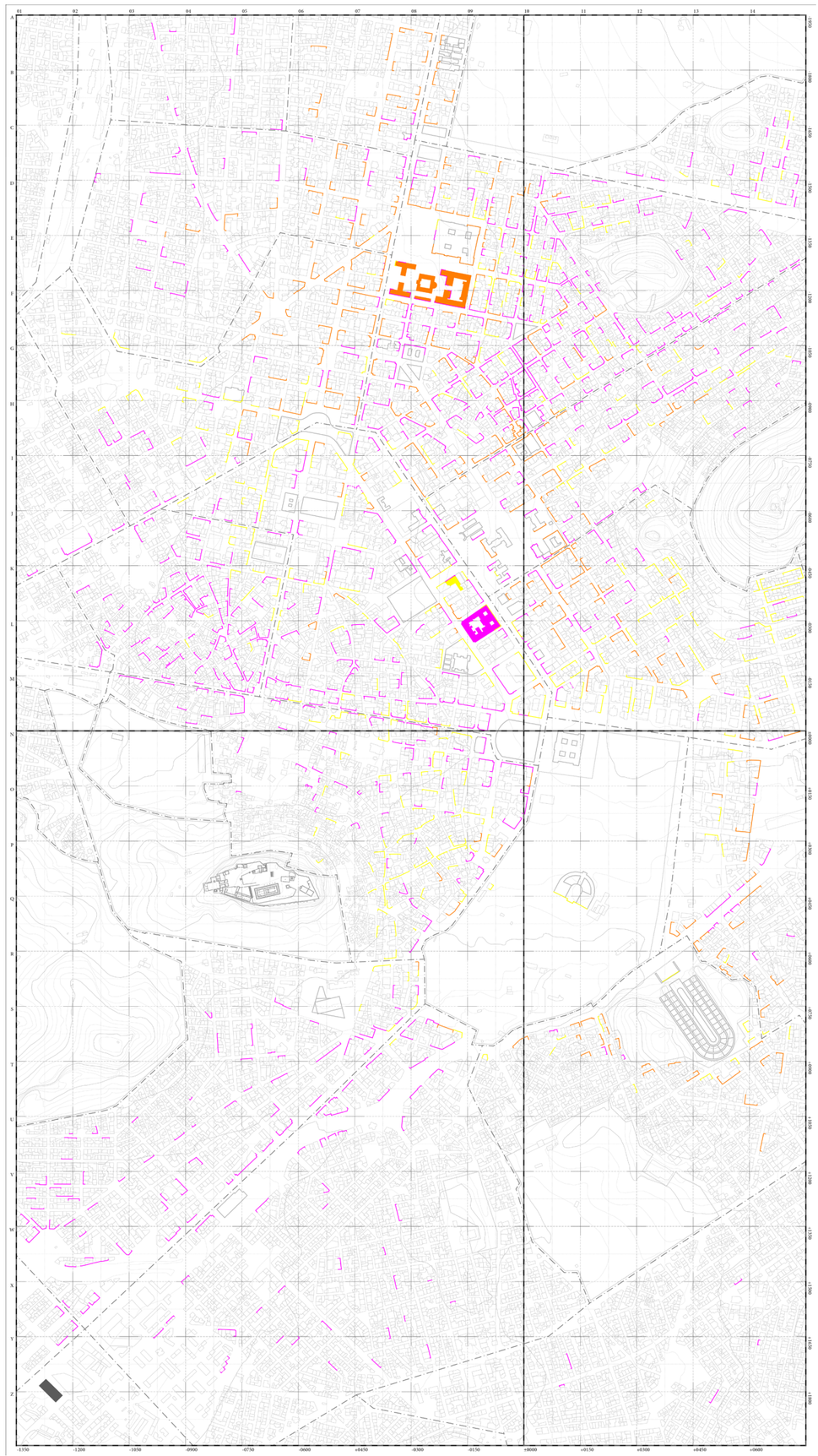

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Parts of this work have been published in the following occasions:

– A few sentences of §0.1.2 have been published in Avramidis, K., & Tsilimpounidi, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City*. London: Routledge.
– Parts of §0.1.3.1 have been published in Avramidis, K. (2014a). Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement. In M. Karra (Ed.), *No Respect* (pp. 21-34, 85-96). Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre.
– Parts of §0.1.3.2 have been published in Avramidis, K. (2014a). Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement. In M. Karra (Ed.), *No Respect* (pp. 21-34, 85-96). Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre.
– Small parts of §0.1.3.3 have been published in Avramidis, K. (2014a). Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement. In M. Karra (Ed.), *No Respect* (pp. 21-34, 85-96). Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre; and Avramidis, K. (2015). Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens. *The Design Journal, 18*(4), 513-534.
– Parts of §1.2.11 have been published in Avramidis, K. (2014b). The Agency of Space on the Scene of Encounter: Thoughts on the Situational Nature of Perception. In K. Drakopoulou & A. Fakis (Eds.), *Meta* (pp. 47-54). Athens: Futura.
– Parts of §2.1.1 have been published in Avramidis, K. (2015). Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens. *The Design Journal, 18*(4), 513-534.
– A few sentences of §3.1.1 have been published in Avramidis, K. (2012). 'Live your Greece in Myths': Reading the Crisis on Athens' Walls. Professional Dreamers, *working paper no.8.* Available at: http://www.professionaldreamers.net/_prowp/wp-content/uploads/Avramides-Reading-the-Crisis-on-Athens-walls-fld.pdf. Accessed: 15 December 2014.
– Large parts of §3.2 (excluding §3.2.2, §3.2.7, §3.2.9 and §3.2.10) have been published in Avramidis, K. (2015). Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens. *The Design Journal, 18*(4), 513-534.
– A few sentences of §3.2.11 have been published in Avramidis, K., & Drakopoulou, K. (2015). Moving From Urban to Virtual Spaces and Back: Learning In/From Signature Graffiti Subculture. In P. Jandrić & D. Boras (Eds.), *Critical Learning in Digital Networks* (pp. 133-160). New York, NY: Springer.
– A few sentences of §4.1.0 have been published in Avramidis, K., & Tsilimpounidi, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City*. London: Routledge.

Abstract

This thesis proposes a critical exchange between *architecture* and *graffiti*. Graffiti in Athens plays a key role in the expression of Greek tensions making this city an ideal place for developing such an exchange. The author acts in a *three-fold manner* in this research: as *architectural designer*, one with an impulse to survey by drawing and capable of grasping the matrix of the surfaces upon which graffiti finds an expression; as *graffiti writer,* somebody with some practical experience as graffitist hence partially equipped to decode the graffiti matrix placed on any given architectural matrix; and as *writer on graffiti*, who is interested in bringing together and working between the architectural and graffiti matrices to reveal their convergences, deviations and interdependences, and, in so doing, expose the hidden spatiality of graffiti writing. Stemming from this peculiar triple positioning, this book promotes a new situating of Athenian inscriptions. The thesis is *presented* as an Atlas of Athenian Inscriptions, a book of drawings of writings and writings on drawings. The Atlas offers, in both drawn and written form, a close study of *four situations* in which graffiti has been recorded.

The thesis regards a recent significant graffiti Exhibition – in which the author is actively implicated by being invited into it as a graffiti writer and writer on graffiti – as a starting point, as its *situation zero*. By de-situating graffiti from its original urban and political context whilst placing it onto the gallery surfaces, this thesis argues that the Exhibition undermines graffiti's critical potency and has transformed graffiti into an aesthetic object. However, perhaps paradoxically, presenting graffiti as an empty gesture, the Exhibition nonetheless raises questions concerning the *situating role of graffiti*. By including it in the Atlas together with the following more overt surface ruptures in political edifices, the Exhibition is framed as an equally political situation. The *other three situations*, all in Athens' city centre, reflect three important periods in local political history and are emblematic in that they are the epicentres of historical ruptures during which they are extensively graffitied: the former Nazi Detention Centre which operates during the Axis occupation (1941-1944); the Athens Polytechnic that plays a pivotal role in the student uprising against the Greek Military Junta (1967-1974); and the Bank of Greece HQ building which is a site of recurring political expression in contemporary crisis (2010-2015).

The Atlas indexes graffiti and related information from the city of Athens, the systematic organisation of which creates different graffiti-related matrices allowing us to make sense of, *navigate* in and *reconstruct* the Athenian graffiti landscape through characteristic surface environments. By placing different political situations in the same set with the Exhibition, the thesis aims to give critical voice to how graffiti is perceived. By resituating (graffiti) images, the Atlas restores broken and creates new links between them and their surfaces whilst revealing not only the spatiality of graffiti in Athens but also the spatiality of architecture of Athens as a recurring tension between the matrices of *dissensus* and *consensus*. The thesis deconstructs the mythology that architecture represents consensus and graffiti dissensus, since each is embedded in the other. Ultimately, by carefully considering graffiti's *situating character* and *graphic articulation*, this research promotes rupture to the smoothing of its political asperity attempted by architecture, institutions and those writing on graffiti that seek to restrain it.

Acknowledgements

My immense thanks go to my supervisors Dr Ella Chmielewska and Dr Dorian Wiszniewski from the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA) for their enlightening guidance and constant support in the materialization of this project. Their constructive advice and critical insights on the multiple aspects of the thesis contributed decisively to its development and brought completely new perspectives to this research. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr Maria Theodorou and Dr Tahl Kaminer who have taken the time to thoroughly read the dissertation. Their thought-provoking comments and valuable suggestions helped me a great deal to further develop this work. I'm also grateful to a number of people from the ESALA who generously shared their thoughts on my work or gave me the opportunity to teach alongside them: Professor Mark Dorrian, Dr Penny Travlou, Dr Tolulope Onabolu, Professor Richard Coyne, Dr Jim Lawson, Dr Michelle Bastian and Dr Dimitris Theodossopoulos.

Parts of this research have been presented in various occasions or published in journals and books. I would like to warmly thank all those who commented on my work and specifically the following for motivating me towards a more insightful approach: Dr Aylwyn Walsh, Dr Petar Jadrić, Professor Jilly Traganou, Dr Artemis Yagou, and Professor Kostas Moraitis. I am also grateful to several invited speakers, in particular those who – as part of the 'Prokalo' series and the 'Plenitude and Emptiness' conference that I had the chance to co-organise – generously responded to my research in-progress: Professor Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Dr Penelope Haralambidou, Dr Ersi Ioannidou, Professor Perry Kulper, Professor Alexander Brodsky and Professor Paul Carter. I am especially thankful to the contributors of the 'Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City' volume who, through their diverse disciplinary positions and approaches, enriched my understanding of graffiti's relationship with urban environments. I wholeheartedly thank Dr Myrto Tsilimpounidi and Dr Konstantina Drakopoulou with whom I was privileged to collaborate on several occasions during my research – I could not have asked for more passionate partners on this research topic.

This thesis is an extension of the research undertaken in the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh). I feel it is only appropriate to thank my former supervisors for helping me appreciate the potential research directions of my subject and equipping me with the necessary skills to embark my PhD journey: Professor Georgios Parmenidis, Professor Stavros Stavrides and Dr Eleni Kalafati from the NTUA, as well as Professor Sasa Lada, Professor Lois Papadopoulos and Professor Dimitris Fragos from AUTh.

Yeoryia Moustaka has been the greatest intellectual and personal companion from the early conceptualization of this research and I most gratefully thank her for her love and support – this project would not have been possible without you. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to my family for being the epitome of love and encouragement, my graffiti family for being an inexhaustible source of inspiration and excitement, and my colleagues at the studio for the numerous stimulating conversations.

I would also like to acknowledge my indebtedness to many people who were instrumental in helping me complete this thesis: Ms Marilena Karra from the Onassis Cultural Centre who curated the 'No Respect' exhibition and organized the 'Disrespectful Creativity' conference; Ms Frini Papageorgiou from the 'Korai 4 Space of Historical Memory' for providing me access to the space and the inspirational conversations we had; Professor Eleni Maistrou from the NTUA for kindly offering the CAD drawings of the Athens Polytechnic; Mr Nikolaos E Tolis for allowing me to search his unique photographic collection; Mr Manolis Ntaloukas for generously offering me rich material from his private photographic collection; Ms Eleni Sotiropoulou and Ms Ismini Dania from the Directorate of Protection and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Monuments; and all the archivists who enabled my visits to their premises or answered my questions remotely, thus ensuring the smoothness of the whole process. Thank you also to the librarians of the Athens School of Fine Arts and the Architecture Libraries of ESALA and NTUA who facilitated my research. I'm also thankful to the ECA's workshop and media lab staff for their help in a number of occasions.

This research was made possible by the Edinburgh College of Art scholarship of the University of Edinburgh to which I am indebted for its generosity.

conceptual space of the city

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Reference in Situation 1. 000

Image 000

Caption of image 000. A00 refers to the locational code of the image in the city. 000 A00

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Reference in Situation 3. 000

physical space of the text

0.0. SECTION TITLE

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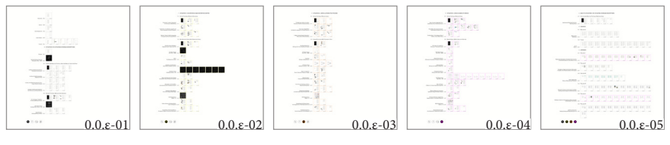
Contents 0.0.ε 

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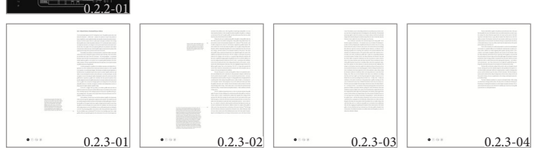
Taking Positions: Situating Writing on Athens 0.2.3 

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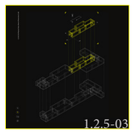
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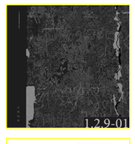
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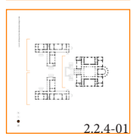
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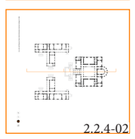
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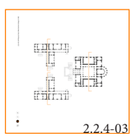
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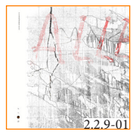
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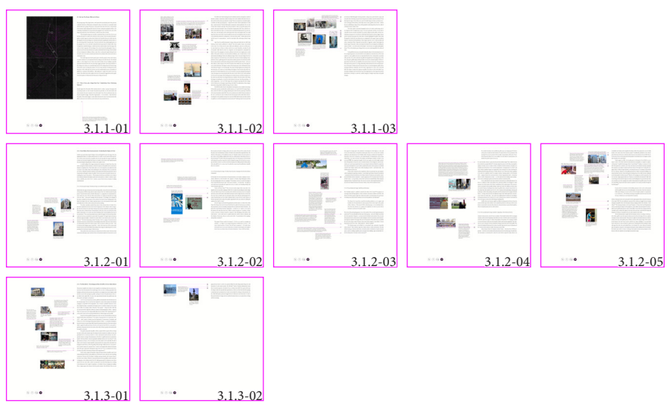

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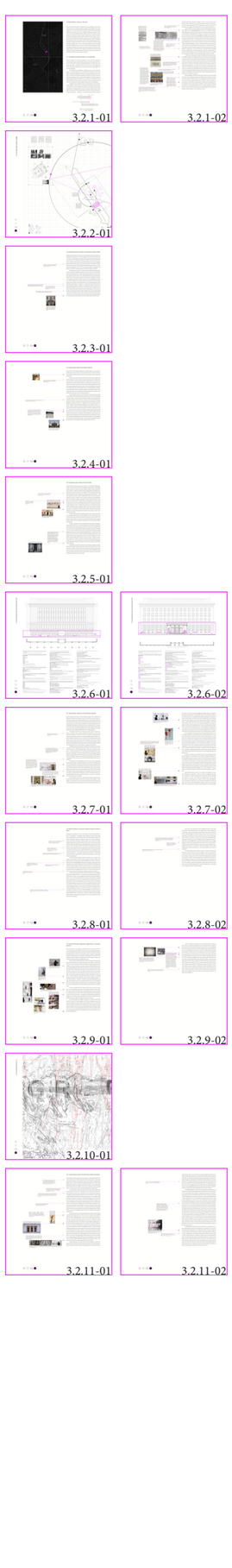

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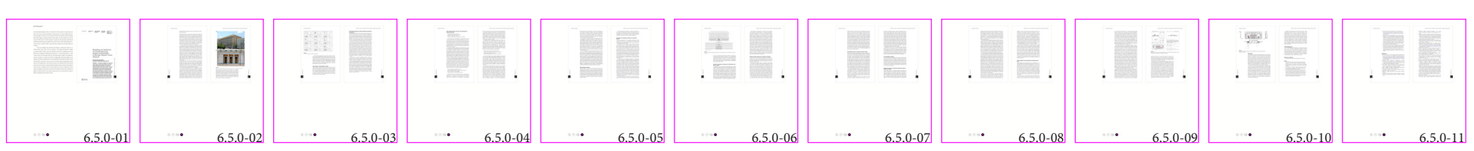

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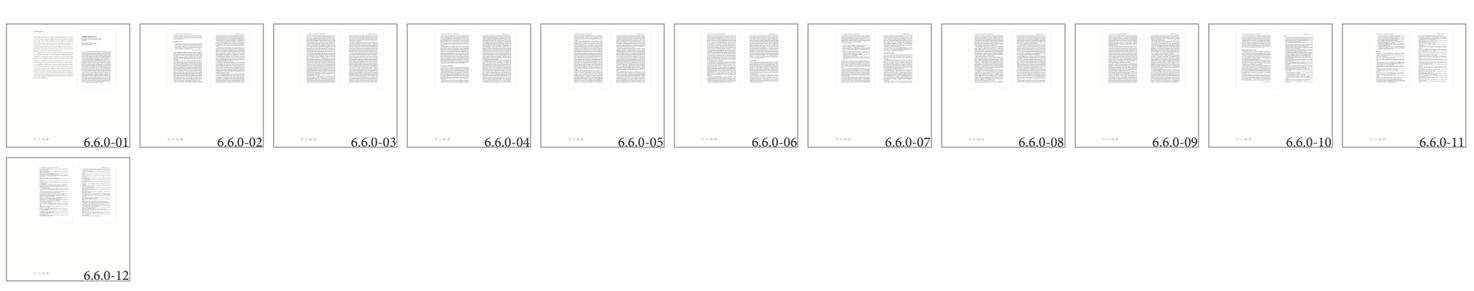
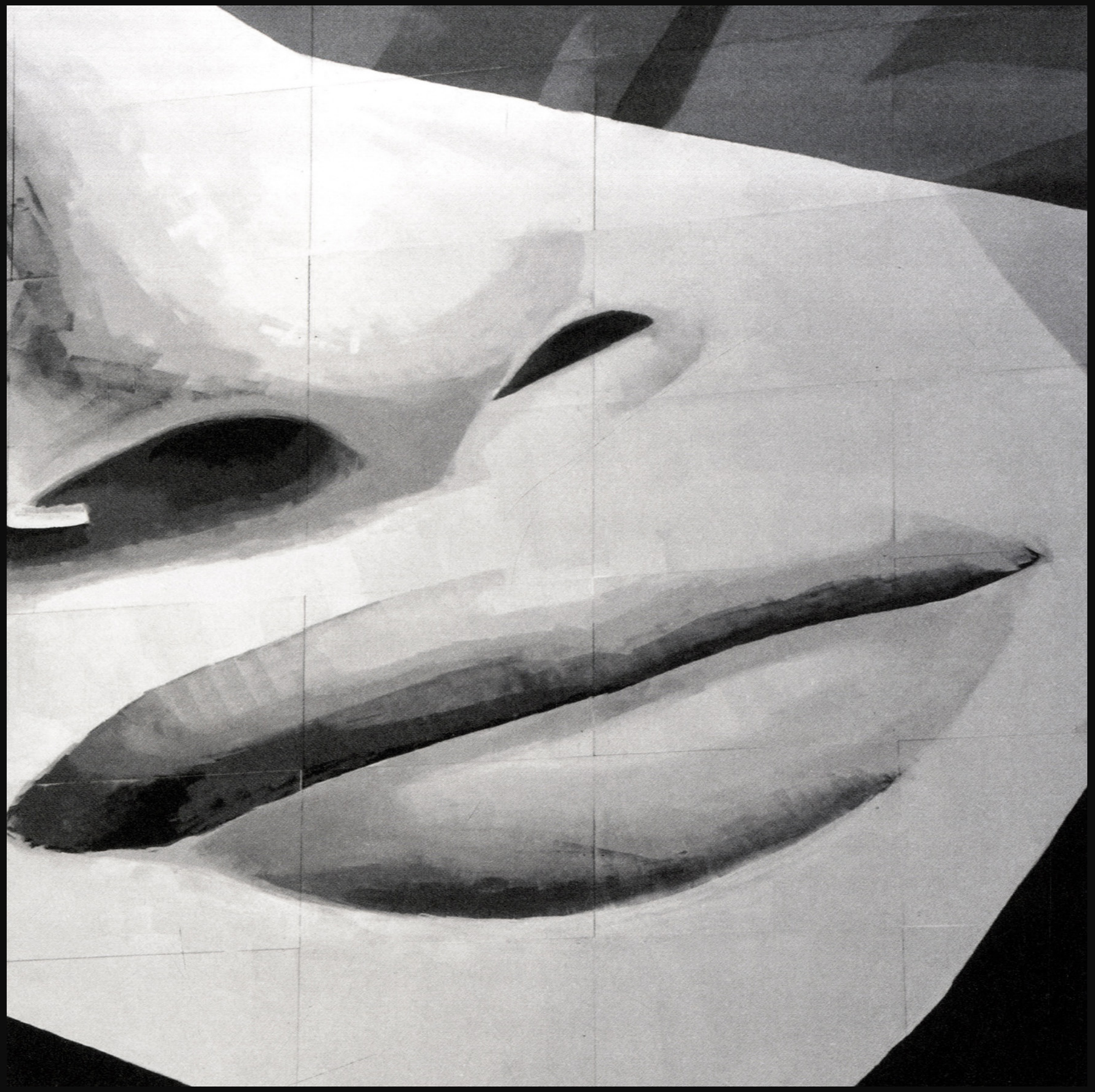




0.0.1. Prologue

This thesis is about graffiti writing and Athens. It is also about the architecture of Athens and the architecture of graffiti as well as the ways in which their matrices meet. As such, the aim here is to propose a *critical exchange* between *architecture* and *graffiti*. I attempt to do so through the study of graffiti in *three plus one* specific *situations* in Athens. These studies offer *four understandings* of those situations where graffiti is central. Of course, I never complete the whole picture of 'graffiti and Athens' because I'm dealing with only four situations but I'm going to show how they can be interconnected through *history* and *place*, which are key in the understanding of each situation.

This dissertation regards a recent major graffiti exhibition – organised by the Onassis Cultural Centre – as a starting point, as its *situation zero.* The following three situations, all in Athens' city centre, offer a survey that further locates the Onassis exhibition in political history but also then as one of a set of surface ruptures in political edifices. By inclusion in the Atlas, this exhibition is framed as a political situation as much as the following three more overt surface ruptures. As a series, not only do they clearly amplify specific political questions but they also open questions around the *situating role of graffiti*. Each of the *other three situations* is emblematic in its particular own way. Each reflects a different important historical period for the Athenian context and acts as an epicentre of historical rupture during which specific walls are extensively graffitied: the former *Nazi Detention Centre* operates during the Axis occupation (1941-1944); the *Athens Polytechnic* is a site of student protest during the period of the Greek Military Junta (1967-1974); the *Bank of Greece* HQ building is a target of recurring political expression in the contemporary crisis (2010-2015).

The situation is both the *context* in which graffiti is undertaken as well as the *action* of graffiti itself, the timeframe within it. Thus, the only way to appreciate a situation is in *time*. We need history to make sense of the situations but each history of each situation blends into the other. Also, each situation needs to be examined in its *place*. Places, however, are bigger than buildings and that's why I expand that context to become understandable. So, before even getting into graffiti we already get into the situation in which we find graffiti and, therefore, condition something of the graffiti. Situation conditions the 'architecture of graffiti', i.e. its historical uniqueness and material execution, its structural principles and orders.

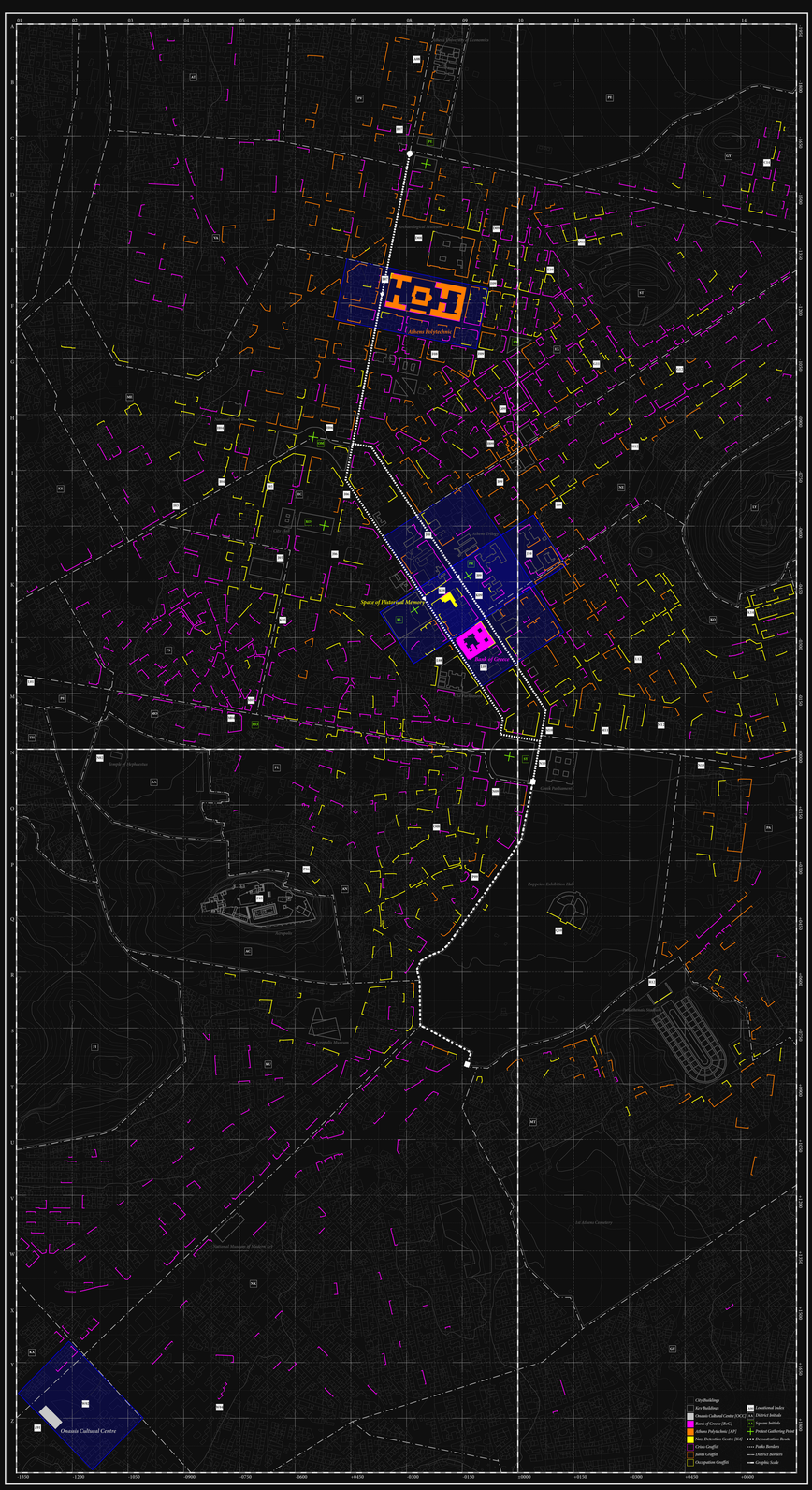
Graffiti writing is in correspondence to the surface. The surface, in turn, is in correspondence to the situation – constituted in a specific time and milieu – that occasions the graffiti in the first instance. My method to navigate all these sets of relationships and develop the four situations is to use *drawings* and *writings*, and the relationships between drawing and writing. The *drawings* as much describe the situation as they open it. The drawings describe some aspects of the situation and, by the same token, describe the graffiti and open up questions of graffiti. The *writings* further contextualise each writing situation and the discourse surrounding it while reflecting on the issues emerging from the drawings of writings.

The actual place and time of this thesis lies in my drawings and texts. I'm working in Athens in the drawings and writings, and thus they become my situation. So, this book should be seen as a new reality of the places and times it represents. As an object, the Atlas not only sets up but also deconstructs and reconstructs these four situations of Athens. In so doing, it participates and gets into the situationality of graffiti. It works as a *substitute* of being in Athens at any point of history. The (reading of the) Atlas is a situation in its own right, a *fifth situation*, the time of Athens right now.



0.0.2-01: Athenian Writing Landscape [1:25000]







0.1. Framing And Navigating The Atlas: Notes On Method, Content And Form

This section opens with a series of instructions on how to use and orient in the atlas at hand while providing the reasoning behind particular design choices. In a sense, this first part focuses on the form of presentation and structure of the thesis. Next, I briefly outline the academic works conducted on the topic to date, positioning them in a disciplinary perspective whilst focusing on the methods they follow and/or introduce. As this study is situated at the intersection of Athenian studies and graffiti scholarship, I limit my discussion to these. The following subsection comes as a continuation of the previous paragraph responding to the issues emerging from the literature review. It puts emphasis on key graffiti characteristics urging for a shift of focus in the study of graffiti, whilst introducing the theoretical framework of this research. The last part of this section discusses in detail the key design methodological references that largely influenced the content and form of this thesis. This section concludes with notes on the proposed design method before moving to the examination of the specific situations.

0.1.1. An Atlas of Athenian Inscriptions: Orienting in the Document

The size of this book is 450x450mm. This comes from the size of the human (graffitist's) body which is central to the thesis. Therefore, each page is proportionate to the body; in this case, the author's own body. The body is implicated in each writing and drawing, whether on a page or a wall. So, this book is presented in the appropriate body scale for the reader to engage with the inscriptions. Regardless of the scales of the drawings, the whole Atlas is adapted to the scale of the body. We can think of the Atlas as a map; we are scaled in relation to it.

The Atlas indexes graffiti and related information from the city of Athens. Since we cannot see all these at once, the reader is navigated through different *places* and *times*, and is encouraged to move between *scales*. The suggested sequence of reading stems from the archival surfaces and the surface-drawings I've made from this material. The atlas is a device which re-situates images and thus is capable for creating innovative relationships, deciphering particular correlations and producing new meanings. It is an apparatus that allows us to make sense of, navigate in and reconstruct the Athenian graffiti landscape through characteristic surface environments.

The Atlas organises, arranges and sequences on sheets the visual material – whether found or produced – as well as the textual commentary. The *writings* and the *drawings* presented here are distinct from each other. They are simultaneities, they happen in parallel. The reader has the licence to read an essay (e.g., a chapter, subchapter or subsection) and leave it there because there is an autonomy in and between the texts, i.e. each piece of text is a 'textuality' of Athenian graffiti situations. They do not demand to read everything to understand them nor in the suggested sequence. The reader is free to transgress the suggested sequence travelling from one section to the next or from the first to the last, creating new associations thus enabling multiple readings of the material. In the same way that we can see the drawings independently – but also as an accretion of knowledge – so we can do with the texts. This



essentially proposes a kind of rereading – or rather two parallel readings – of the research material.

The totality of *images* creates different graffiti-related matrices and is serialised in two parallel ways: in relation to *texts* and *drawings*. Each *text page* is divided in two 'columns'. The text sits on the right 'column' while the corresponding images and references occupy the left 'column' and are indexed with lines. This way, the text creates a matrix of its own which serialises the images. The page conforms to the matrix dictated by the text, making each page work as a map. In other words, the pages of texts operate similarly to the pages of the drawings. This unified spatial indexing of pages further highlights and reflects the way in which the graffiti content is serialised on architectural surfaces. In the *drawing pages*, the graffiti images are indexed physically – either as photographs or as their trace-over transcriptions – to the specific places on the line drawing. Therefore, each of these drawings creates a particular constellation of images arranged according to the matrix of the drawing. Some of the images might be repeated – either by re-appearing in texts or drawings pages – but when they are in a different layout they are doing something else. In a sense, both texts and drawings' sheets reflect the *relative* character of graffiti images and their *spatiality*.

This research is *structured* around the three plus one situations. The main chapters are divided in two parts. The first is setting the scene of the particular historical period, bringing in related artistic and historic material that informs the understanding of the case study. The second part focuses on the edifice under question; it contextualises each site and closely examines its inscriptions while drawing linkages with images and events external to it. In all three chapters the graffiti writings are studied together with their environments and are explored in many scales through a series of associated drawings.

This study zooms in and out in space and time. It moves between different scales – from the mark to the wall and from the building to the street – and makes connections between seemingly unrelated and distant historical periods – from the Greek nation building to the contemporary crisis era – so as to bring together the material and spatial specificity of the individual graphic mark with the wider urban visual environment, social reality and national imaginary. Since graffiti are inherently localized and convey meanings due to their placement in specific contexts, my drawings operate as maps allowing the identification of the inscriptions and the navigation through their surface territories.

Starting from the scale of the city (1:2500), a drawing of Athens' city centre locates the three plus one situations on the map and indicates key boundaries, districts, squares and buildings.[001] The drawing introduces the writing landscape of Athens. As such, its coordinates and cardinal points are not the same with the ones traditionally found in the maps of this city. The drawing not only sets up this different cardinality but also suggests the preferred axis of reading for the Atlas. It also maps the geographical density of graffiti writing in every historical period.[002] This is indicated with lines of different colours on the faces of buildings. This is because the thesis revolves around the question that buildings and writings on buildings are both in the same spatial practice. This map is not simply a drawing of buildings but of writings on buildings and how buildings and writings support each other, or are in dialogue with each other. Each colour indexes a particular era: yellow for the occupation (1941-1944), orange for the dictatorship (1967-1974) and magenta for contemporary crisis (2010-2015). Further, in this drawing a system of geographical coding is established enabling the identifi-

Due to the importance of this drawing – as all images are serialised according to this map and I'm making constant reference to it – I provide two versions of it: an Atlas version which is longer, more detailed and fixed; and a hand version which is smaller, detachable and movable, aiming to make easier the navigation of the reader. This hand map sits in the inside cover at the beginning of the Atlas, in a designated pocket page.

001

002

Given that I don't have all the photographic evidence for every single graffito on every single building, it can be said that the map is part imaginary and part real. Yet, there are events throughout history that give me evidence of how much writing there was and where it might have been, thus allowing a degree of speculation while supporting the imaginary involved in the making of the map. Further, given that I know all the magenta, i.e. the contemporary writing layer of the city, it should be noted that some parts of it have been removed because – due to graffiti's overwhelming presence in contemporary Athens – would otherwise cover all the yellow and orange lines. In a sense, the reader is asked to imagine how much writing there must have been through time in the city.



003

These drawings are graphically inspired by Hsiao-Wei Lee's project *Sidlodge*. The drawings of the project examine displacements in Florence and were produced in the context of the MArch programme that was led by Dorian Wiszniewski. For more see Lee, H. (2010). Sidlodge. In D. Wiszniewski (Ed.), *Florence: Curating the City* (pp. 90-97). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

cation of the provenance of each graffito in the city. By re-situating these images, they cease being from 'anywhere' and become products of a particular 'somewhere', reinitiating talking to the places they come from and each other. Graffiti images cease being historically and/or randomly serialised and start becoming spatially serialised, gradually revealing – as the Atlas develops – the spatiality of Athenian graffiti. In a sense, this drawing maps the geographical context of the Athenian graffiti landscape whilst setting the spatial boundaries of this study. The drawing is divided according to a rectangular grid to make the procedure more accurate and facilitate its navigation. Each square of the grid is indexed with a letter-number prefix: the letter refers to the vertical axis while the number to the horizontal, thus generating a unique locational 'code' for each box. This allows the serialisation and localisation of graffiti imagery to the drawing and the city it represents.

Next, we move to the scale of each individual case study with a series of drawings examining the specific sites and their contexts (1:2000).[003] Since every situation is a bigger place than the edifice, I study an expanded context to enrich its understanding. Every one of these three drawings creates a network of places and histories that contribute to the understanding of each situation. It draws linkages to illustrate the hidden relations of the different contexts and the significant role they play in the meaning that the inscriptions convey.

After that, we zoom further in and look closely at the writing surfaces of each case study (scales ranging from 1:100 to 1:20). In these series of graffiti drawings every found inscription of each site is documented adopting an appropriate (empirical) technique. In each drawing I'm interested in three interrelated parts: the base, the writings and their indexing. The base drawing constitutes my writing surface and, as such, its provenance, the historical moment it captures and the techniques used to represent it are important. The base drawing also introduces the architectural matrix upon which graffiti is serialised. The graffiti writings are represented in various ways depending on the available material and the scale of the drawing. They are placed and drawn according to the spatial rules dictated by the base drawing while superimposing their own matrix. The index of the writings is about their content as well as their spatialisation. Every single graffito is graphically transcribed into drawing so as to be positioned on its exact location on the surface and, eventually, in relation to the other writings with which they interact and shape bonds whilst sharing the same surface. In a sense, the elevations and/or sections function here as maps for the situation and serialisation of the graffiti marks. In so doing, these drawings reveal the dialogue between the matrices of graffiti and architecture. Also, the perverted manner through which survey drawing techniques are used here – in that they represent architecture retrospectively and document graffiti which is something that is not normally surveyed – not only compromises the orthodoxy of line drawings but also challenges our traditional linear reading of texts whilst foregrounding a spatial way of treating graffiti. By using drawing techniques to study the placement of graffiti writings against and within the matrix of their architectural surfaces, it is possible to decipher their spatial code and expose a series of misalignments between the two matrices whilst revealing graffiti's capability to stretch the matrix of each surface.

Finally, for every case study I've produced an actual scale drawing (1:1) in order to explore the dense materiality and the different conditions of characteristic surfaces in each site. In an attempt to represent – in such an intimate scale – the degrees of symbiosis between inscriptions and their unique surface environments, new ways of looking at graffiti and the

site emerge that capture the idiosyncrasies of the writings. In other words, as the drawings zoom in scale document and explore specific graffiti features: the urban contexts, the physical texts and the writing gestures respectively. The context drawings map and weave connections between varied historical and geographical information to deepen the understanding of each situation; the texts series of drawings explore the placement and, by extension, the spatiality of graffiti; while the gesture drawings explore the material and graphic expression of the corresponding writings.

Every time the reader enters a 'section' of a situation – whether a particular historical era of graffiti writing or a specific building – encounters a version of the 'Athenian Writing Landscape' drawing with only the appropriate layers switched on. So, the images of the subsequent pages take up the space which was occupied by the opening map. In other words, the left 'column' of each text sheet becomes the conceptual space of the city. The matrix of the map – and, by extension, a notion of the matrix of the city – and the matrix of the text are placed on the same page and talk to each other. The images are serialised in relation to the text and are situated in relation to the city. Further, each figure is accompanied by a geographical code (appearing underneath its serial number) indicating the image's provenance in the 'Athenian writing landscape' map, i.e. its origin in the city.

Shapes of the key buildings are placed in the appropriate orientation at the bottom corner of the pages to facilitate the navigation of the Atlas and let the reader constantly know where s/he is. When the reader enters a chapter the corresponding shape switches on and the rest off. In the occasion of discussing none or multiple situations concurrently, then zero or more than one shapes are activated. When one is in the first section of each chapter – where wall writing in Athens during the respective historical period is discussed – the outline of the corresponding shape is coloured in order to be consistent to the indexing system of the 'Athenian Writing Landscape' map. When one moves to the second section which talks about the particular building, however, the shape of the edifice becomes colourised.

The Atlas consists of a series of maps and a series of text-pages as maps. As such, all the sheets should be thought as images. The table of contents reflects this understanding and acts as an unfolded map of the Atlas document. Therefore, a traditional pagination system does not seem to be appropriate. Instead of a set of page numbers, I have a set of sections of maps. The chapters are not enumerated as texts but as images. In a sense, the page numbers reflect the sectionality and sequentiality that the Atlas determines for itself.

The Atlas concludes with an extensive list of the visual and textual sources followed by an appendix where all the papers written and published over the course of my PhD are categorically organised and critically reflected upon, discussing the role of each published text in the dissertation whilst raising questions regarding their (standard) modes of enquiry in relation to the by design nature of the thesis. The logic followed throughout the Atlas is reversed in the appendix: the space of the text is now occupied by images showing texts, thus blurring the line between the two even further. The appendix allows the reader situate different aspects of the work in different stages of development thus enabling him/her navigate both the Athenian graffiti landscape and my three-fold outputs of graffiti in and on Athens.



0.1.2. An Atlas of Graffiti Scholarship: Mapping the Field[004]

There is no more appropriate place to begin than New York City when one aims to sketch a map of the graffiti field. NYC was, without doubt, the centre of contemporary graffiti's boom in the 1970s. NYC bequeathed us with not only a unique writing style but also – and most importantly for this thesis – a particular framing and understanding of it. During that time, NYC is in decline facing bankruptcy. This financial crisis – directly associated with the collapse of the real estate markets – resulted to the growth of ghettos and accelerated processes of extreme social and spatial segregation. NYC's extensive subway system not only facilitated the rapid spread of the marks in dispersed dilapidated neighbourhoods and made the ghettos visible across the city but also became the means through which youngsters could communicate bypassing their geographical and social isolation.[005] In this context, the dynamic scrawls of the marginalised urban youths – who are mainly coming from ethnic minorities living in poor and problematic areas – are seen not as symptoms but as causes of the decay that the NYC is experiencing. In other words, graffiti writing becomes a scapegoat; it is constructed as an urban problem, and targeted as responsible for the extensive degradation of the urban environment.[006]

NYC, at the same time, was the centre of the gallery world. Gallerists and people from the art establishment diagnose the potentials of graffiti as an original art style. Hugo Martinez – a sociology major at the time who later developed into a well-known graffiti gallerist – was meant to become an iconic figure in the history of signature graffiti writing as one of the first who transferred it into the galleries. Martinez established the famous Union of Graffiti Artists – consisting of a number of prominent subway graffitists of the time – whose work he exhibited.[007] The first graffiti show was held in 1973 in the Razor Gallery NYC and curated by Martinez. In so doing, he contributed not only to graffiti's legitimation and wider acceptance but also to its gradual aestheticisation and commodification. Martinez managed to elevate graffiti from marks signalling decay to signs of artistic value worth being in a gallery space. Thenceforth, graffiti around the globe is often supported by the state or cultural institutions, it is used to aesthetically camouflage urban processes such as 'creative regenerations' or gentrification projects, and it frequently appears in commercials and exhibitions aiming to give a touch of rebelliousness to whatever they seek to promote.

Without aiming to reduce the importance of May 1968 slogans in Paris or the messages on the Berlin wall in the 1980s, one has to acknowledge that NYC framed the practice and understanding of graffiti in many levels. For example, the contemporary social reception, stereotyping and treatment of graffiti in most cities around the world – i.e. a vandalistic mark making practice exercised by unprivileged youths – are inheritance from NYC. Further, the foundations on the ways art world perceives graffiti as an aesthetic practice capitalising on its potential political dimensions have been first laid in NYC. Finally, the means by which journalists and academics document their growing local scenes and the ways they talk about graffiti are also framed by their NYC predecessors.

Graffiti's diffusion around the globe and gradual permeation in popular culture has resulted to a large amount of books on the subject aimed for a wider public readership.[008] The vast majority of these publications are non-academic and focus on contemporary (post late

004 Small parts of this section have been published in Avramidis, K., & Tsilimpounidi, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City*. London: Routledge.

005 As the works listed below have demonstrated, the NYC subway system played a significant role in the birth, evolution and dissemination of graffiti in these formative years. This early period of graffiti is often called 'Subway Art' (after particular publications), whereas 'Aerosol Art' is another frequently used term referring to a latter period when graffiti began being executed primarily on walls. See Chalfant, H., & Prigoff, J. (1987). *Spraycan Art*. New York, NY: Thames and Hudson; Cooper, M., & Chalfant, H. (1984). *Subway Art*. New York, NY: Thames and Hudson; Stewart, J. (2009). *Graffiti Kings: New York Transit Art of the 1970s*. New York, NY: Abrams. Note that the latter was published after Stewart's death and is based on his 1989 seminal doctoral dissertation, entitled *Mass Transit Art Subway Graffiti: An Aesthetic Study of Graffiti on the Subway System of New York City, 1970-1978*, examining this particular graffiti era.

006 Historian Joe Austin traces how New York graffiti was constructed – by the media and the municipal authorities – as an "urban problem", a condition that created a 'moral panic' which legitimated and paved the way for the famous – and extremely expensive – 'wars on graffiti'. For more details see Austin, J. (2001). *Taking the Train: How Graffiti Art became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

007 Castleman, C. (1982). *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 117. For more details on graffiti's relationship with gallery art and its evolution in gallery settings, see Thompson, M. (2009). *American Graffiti*. New York, NY: Parkstone Press. pp. 143-192.

008 Numerous coffee table books concerned with regional styles from cities worldwide have been published in the recent years and, of course, a myriad of illustrative books on the work of the notorious British street artist Banksy.

1960s) New York style graffiti, thus leaving aside – or at least not bringing together – other forms of parietal writing. These works come primarily from journalists and photographers and sometimes from the practitioners themselves, and their main purpose is to document the history and the development of this writing genre.

Graffiti's omnipresence in urban environments and contemporary visual culture has inspired a rich academic body of literature from a number of disciplines which has examined it in various ways: as a gang-affiliated activity related to territorial demarcation;[009] as a (sub) cultural practice directly linked to issues of gender and identity building;[010] as an artistic genre that developed an innovative stylistic vocabulary and its role in urban visual culture;[011] and as a subversive act that has been gradually criminalized and regulated.[012] The majority of these notable studies, as well as many others on the topic, follow ethnographic methods with interviews being their prominent mode of approaching the subject. Their main emphasis is on signature graffiti, its aesthetics and the motives of the practitioners, thus overlooking the individual writings or the specific places in which they take place. In so doing, they fail to address issues of site-specificity and uniqueness of each inscription. Contrary, this dissertation focuses on the material artefacts of writing which are by definition localized. To do so, this study distances itself from sociological and ethnographic methods and moves into the domain of the visual and material, while building upon those few academic works that share similar sensitivities regarding graffiti's context-dependence, and which are analysed in detail below.

Kurt Iveson's study of the signature graffiti scene in Sydney is an important text for this thesis as it brings together the material and immaterial dimensions of publics and public spaces through the notion of "public address".[013] Iveson urges us to shift our focus from the 'content' of graffiti to the 'form' through which these writings are represented, mediatized and circulated. Another work which influenced this thesis is the one by material culture scholar Rafael Schacter who studies contemporary graffiti as ornaments embedded in the structures they occupy, as inseparable components of the physical surfaces upon which they take place.[014] Further, Schacter sees graffiti writing as an event, a performance that takes places in a specific place and time and thus is connected to its situation. Ella Chmielewska's work on graffiti is particularly influential in this study and is discussed in greater detail in a following subsection.

The existence of various pictorial, non-phonetic marks in my case studies emphatically demonstrates the methodological limitations of examining graffiti as solely linguistic signs. This led me to a parallel set of academic works focusing on rock art and ancient graffiti – which is primarily authored by classical studies and archaeology scholars – that has a lot to offer in the study of their contemporary counterparts and the methods which I put to the fore here.[015] These studies' most important elements are the meticulous contextualisation of the case studies,[016] the reconstructive methods they adapt and the ways they document the inscriptions, i.e. drawn together with the substrate of writing.[017] A close look on Mabel Lang's graffiti and dipinti studies in the Athenian Agora, for example, indicates how these ancient writings are understood, treated and represented by archaeologists:[018] the graffiti 'texts' (or images) are carefully drawn and traced over together with the surface upon which they rest, taking into account the borders, the boldness, the positioning, and so on.[019]

For example see Phillips, S. (1999). *Wallbangin': Graffiti and Gangs in L.A.*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press; and Brighenti, A.M. (2010). At the Wall: Graffiti Writers, Urban Territoriality, and the Public Domain. *Space and Culture, 13*(3), 315-332.

009

Macdonald, N. (2001). *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

010

Wacławek, A. (2011). *Graffiti and Street Art*. London: Thames & Hudson.

011

See respectively Ferrell, J. (1993). *Crimes of Style: Urban Graffiti and the Politics of Criminality*. New York, NY: Garland; and Young, A. (2014). *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime and the Urban Imagination*. London: Routledge.

012

Iveson, K. (2007). *Publics and the City*. Oxford: Blackwell.

013

Schacter extends Jonathan Hill's reasoning developed in his short commentary on (s)graffiti, in what the latter calls 'index of immaterial architectures', i.e. architectures in which "the material is perceived as immaterial". See respectively Schacter, R. (2014a). *Ornament and Order: Graffiti, Street Art and the Parergon*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate; and Hill, J. (2006). *Immaterial Architecture*. London: Routledge.

014

The graffiti-related edited collections that recently came out show that the gap between those two research strands – between ancient and contemporary graffiti – is being shortened, inaugurating a new round of productive exchanges. Lovata, T., & Olton, E. (2015). (Eds.). *Understanding Graffiti: Multidisciplinary Studies from Prehistory to the Present*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press; Youkhana, E., & Förster, L. (Eds.). (2015). *Grafficity: Visual Practices and Contestations in Urban Space*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag; Ross, J.I. (Ed.). (2016). *Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art*. London: Routledge.

015

An emblematic study regarding the careful contextualisation of ancient graffiti is Baird, J., & Taylor, C. (Eds.). (2011). *Ancient Graffiti in Context*. London: Routledge.

016

See for example the archaeological drawings in the following occasions: Nash, G. & Chippindale C. (Eds.). (2002). *European Landscapes of Rock-Art*. London: Routledge; David, B., & Wilson, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Inscribed Landscapes: Marking and Making Place*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

017

Lang, M. (1976). *Graffiti and Dipinti*. Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens; Lang, M. (1988). *Graffiti in the Athenian Agora*. Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies of Athens.

018

I do acknowledge the fact that during this process of transcription, a 'mistranslation' of the gesture of writing takes place and a new 'text' is created. In fact, in my projects a double transcription takes place: the inscription on the wall is transcribed into the photographic image and from there is further transcribed into my drawings. The drawings are the final products of this series of transcriptions. Here, the reader needs to consider the marks' different ways of being which are associated with and emerge from their dislocation and transportation from one display space to another, i.e. from the physical walls to these pages.

019

The vast majority of the graffiti studies related to Athens come from journalists and are mostly photographic documentations capturing the history of signature graffiti, its development in specific urban areas, and the evolution of certain writers and artists over time.[020] The Greek scholarship on the subject is quite limited and primarily, if not exclusively, focuses on street art in the Athens of crisis.[021] The graffiti in the Athens of memoranda has attracted attention to such an extent that it appears on academic book covers concerned with crisis, whether the subject in question is the crisis in Athens or contemporary crisis in general.[022] Graffiti in Athens has been primarily studied from an art historical and anthropological perspective, focusing on the development of artistic styles or how politicized writings become means of contestation in the urban setting.[023] Mainly through ethnographic studies, sociologists explore graffiti as a visual indicator and product of social change as well as means of resistance in an urban environment characterized by rapid degradation, or see it as a counter-hegemonic response to the crisis.[024] Architect Panos Leventis offers the most comprehensive account on the relationship of graffiti with its Athenian urban contexts, while discussing it in a specific spatio-temporal frame.[025] Leventis identifies how graffitists appropriate and intervene in particular sites in different moments in the recent history of Athens, thus highlighting the reciprocal relationship that the physical writings share with the urban processes that shapes them and the locales that host them.

Despite the methodological and empirical importance of the aforementioned studies, none examines the way graffiti writing is serialised in architecture. Also, none employs *design* methods to reflect on the reciprocal relationship of graffiti and architecture nor attempts to demonstrate the architecture of graffiti and its spatiality in the particular urban context of Athens. Ultimately, what emerges from this short literature review is the need to cease examining graffiti in *plural* form, prioritising their *cultural* characteristics. Also, graffiti should not be studied as *generic* or *isolated* marks, detached from the sites and surfaces they occupy or the historical circumstances in which they take place. Instead, what is proposed here is to examine each graffito as *unique*, *material* and *situated* writing that acquires its meaning in relation to the context in and the surface on which it appears.

020 See for example Dimaras, Y. (1981). *Towards Something Opened by Someone [Empros ston Etsi pou Harakse o Tetoios]*. Athens: Kaktos; Peponis, G. (2008). *The Walls Belong to the Multitude [Oi Toihoi Anikoun sto Plithos]*. Athens: Pontiki; Iosifidis, K. (1997). *The Colour of the City: Graffiti in Greece [To Hroma tis Polis: To Gkrafiti stin Ellada]*. Athens: Oxi.

021 Perhaps, the first and sole attempt to bring together different and historically distant wall writing genres in Athens belongs to Kostis Liontis. Yet, due to the primarily journalistic nature of the publication, this passed largely unnoticed by the Greek graffiti scholars. Liontis, K. (Ed.). (2005). *With Paint on the Wall [Ston Toicho me Mpogia]*. Athens: Kathimerini/Epta Imeres.

022 See for example Tsilimpounidi, M. & Walsh A. (Eds.). (2014). *Remapping 'Crisis': A Guide to Athens*. London: Zero Books and Schönig, B. & Schipper, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Urban Austerity: Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Cities in Europe*. Berlin: Theater der Zeit.

023 See for example an art historical and an anthropological approach respectively: Drakopoulou, K. (2015a). Guerrilla Art in the Streets of Athens: A Plan for Utopia in Action. In D. Ayers, B. Hjartarson, T. Huttunen & H. Veivo (Eds.), *Utopia: The Avant-Garde, Modernism and (Im)possible Life* (pp. 323-336). Berlin: Walter De Gruyter Inc; Karathanasis, P. (2011). City Walls as 'Contested Spaces': Aesthetics and Urban Landscape in Athens. In K. Giannakopoulos & G. Giannitsiotis (Eds.), *Contested Spaces in the City: The Spatial Dimensions of Culture* (pp. 315-348). Athens: Alexandreia.

024 For instance, see the following sociological works: Tsilimpounidi, M. (2015). "If these Walls Could Talk": Street Art and Urban Belonging in the Athens of Crisis. *Laboratorium, 7*(2), 71-91; Zaimakis, Y. (2015). 'Welcome to the Civilization of Fear': On Political Graffiti Heterotopias in Greece in Times of Crisis. *Visual Communication, 14*(4), 373-396.

025 Leventis, P. (2013). Walls of Crisis: Street Art and Urban Fabric in Central Athens, 2000–2012. *Architectural Histories, 1*(1), 1-10.

0.1.3.1. Unique: From the Plural 'Graffiti' to the Singular 'Graffito'[026]

'Graffiti' is constantly used as an umbrella term referring to every form of unsanctioned text or picture found in different places, contexts and historical periods. Instead of thinking or classifying graffiti under different themes, techniques and/or motives, this research understands it as a unifying category of writing. Graffiti here refers to deliberate mark-making practices ranging in form (e.g., linguistic, representational, abstract), content (e.g., apothegmatic, personal, political), medium (e.g., spray, paintbrush, stylus) and, of course, place of application. The graffiti included here vary from linguistic signs (e.g., slogans or other textual marks) to highly representational and pictorial (e.g., elaborate graffiti pieces), and from non-representational gestures (e.g., paint throwing) to simple lines (e.g., erasing specific existing urban text). In other words, graffiti is seen here as an act of writing and we examine the material result of this mark-making gesture.

Media scholar Sonja Neef, in her examination of the roles of material forms of writing in contemporary era, argues that "strictly speaking, graffiti is handwriting. As such ... [it] is always an eventful action".[027] Every handwriting is the material evidence of the corporeal presence of a person in a specific spatio-temporal situation. Handwriting is also considered to be directly linked to individuality: as unique as the fingerprint of the living physical hand that created it and as singular as the identity of its maker. Then, every single hand-written graffito should be seen as a distinctive physical action which indexes the presence of a unique body in a historically defined moment in a specific place. The handwritten mark is an individual expressive gesture that signifies the unrepeatable performance of someone, somewhere at some point. Neef identifies graffiti's power in this very singularity, in its *unique* material performance. In other words, her work prompts us to consider graffiti writing as an act rather than as mere text, as a unique and unrepeatable writing gesture in a specific spatio-temporal situation.

Perhaps the best way to appreciate graffiti's unique unrepeatable character and its relationship to writing is through the very origin of the word 'graffiti'. Etymologically, 'graffiti' is the plural of 'graffito' which means scribing a surface. That is the reason why the concepts 'graffiti' and 'inscriptions' are used interchangeably here, even though a preference is given to 'inscriptions' as it comes with less conceptual baggage. 'Graffito' derives from the verb *graffiare* which originates from the Latin *graphium*. The latter has its origins to the Greek *graphein* which stands for 'writing'. This given, what is largely called 'graffiti' here, in its various forms, is conceptualized as 'writing', which brings together the written 'message' with the surface it appears on. Paying attention to the material writing surface brings to the fore the importance of specificity and locality. After all, as is the case with every writing, graffiti is site-specific and thus context-dependant. The conceptualization of graffiti as writing allows us to move from the plural form and homogenizing nature of the term 'graffiti' to the singularity of the notion 'graffito' and enables us to appreciate writings in their material, situated form.

026 Parts of this section have been published in Avramidis, K. (2014a). Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement. In M. Karra (Ed.), *No Respect* (pp. 21-34, 85-96). Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre.

027 Neef, S. (2011). *Imprint and Trace: Handwriting in the Age of Technology* (A. Mathews, Trans.). London: Reaktion. p. 276.

0.1.3.2. Material: From the Subject to the Object of Writing[028]

Philosopher of communication Vilém Flusser believes that in order to grasp the meaning of the writing gesture one should look at its original form – i.e. ancient inscriptions – and reminds us that the Greek word *graphein* – which means 'to scratch' – still connotes this "penetrating" nature of writing. In his own words, writing "is a penetrating gesture. To write is to in-scribe, to penetrate a surface, and a written text is an inscription, although as a matter of fact it is in the vast majority of cases an onscription".[029] This 'inscriptional' conceptualisation of writing directly links the text with its surface of application and foregrounds the *material* qualities of writing.

The physical prerequisites of writing – i.e. writing body, instrument and surface – are often taken for granted, rather than being seen as components of meaning making. Chmielewska has identified this lack of attention on these important aspects of writing in graffiti scholarship and prompts us to consider theories, such as the one by linguist Roy Harris, that focus on the material context of writing and, most significantly, on the surface upon which writing is exercised.[030]

Harris proposes a theoretical model that he terms "integrational semiology".[031] He prompts us to probe the relationship between surface and text, and to take into account the material context of the writing's "graphic space". In his integrational approach, he considers the way a text is written and the surface it occupies as semiologically valuable largely contributing to its meaning.[032] For Harris, the writing surface has a semiological function; it is not just the background of writing but its material precondition that plays an active role in the creation and perception of the writing.

Every single writing is made possible by the material surface. Harris puts it simply: "without the writing surface the written characters would have no graphic space to occupy".[033] The graphic mark and the surface it occupies appear together; they are inseparable components of any inscription. The visual, material and semiological aspects as well as the physical constraints of the writing surface, largely dictate the meaning of the written 'text'; so does its physical placement on the surface or the context in which it is encountered.

0.1.3.3. Situated: From the Content to the Context of Writing[034]

Where, when and on what one writes is of great significance: the *situation* of writing matters a lot.[034] William J. Mitchell, in his book *Placing Words,* demonstrates through various examples how urban places are transformed into communicational settings that affect the meaning of situated signs. He argues that the meaning of a message is context-dependant and makes his point simply, and quite directly, in the very first lines of the book: "Shouting 'fire' in a crowded theatre produces a dramatically different effect from barking the same word to a squad of soldiers with guns".[036] The function of the same linguistic content – the word 'fire' in this case – changes due to its placement in different contexts. The same is the case with graffiti writings: their meaning is not generic but is determined by their spatio-temporal situation. Chmielewska borrows the term "topo-sensitivity" from Umberto Eco in order to

028 Parts of this section have been published in Avramidis, K. (2014a). Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement. In M. Karra (Ed.), *No Respect* (pp. 21-34, 85-96). Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre.

029 Flusser, V. (2009/1985). The Gesture of Writing. *Flusser Studies, 8*, 1-18. p. 1.

030 Chmielewska, E. (2007). Framing [Con]text: Graffiti and Place. *Space and Culture, 10*(2), 145-169. p. 151.

031 Harris, R. (1995). *Signs of Writing*. London: Routledge.

032 Harris, R. (1995). *Signs of Writing*. London: Routledge. p. 113.

033 Harris, R. (1995). *Signs of Writing*. London: Routledge. p. 115.

Parts of this section have been published previously in Avramidis, K. (2014a). Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement. In M. Karra (Ed.), *No Respect* (pp. 21-34, 85-96). Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre; and Avramidis, K. (2015). Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens. *The Design Journal, 18*(4), 513-534.

034

035 Harris raises this point and invites us wonder whether it is the same to put a signature on a blank piece of paper and a contract. The contact is full of conventions and is delivered to the signatory already formulated. One cannot damage the contract or sign it with a non-permanent writing instrument (e.g., a pencil) because that would question the validity of the mark. Nor can one sign wherever s/he wishes; there is a prepared and designated "dotted line" at the bottom right corner of the paper which presupposes that the (Westerner) signatory had read and accepts the terms of the agreement. This basic mark of presence entails legal obligations and expresses consent. The meaning of the signature, as of any mark, emanates from its specific placement on the particular surface. In a sense, each wall is like a prepared contract document; it affects and is affected by the position of the mark. For more details see Harris, R. (2001). *Rethinking Writing*. London: Continuum. pp. 172-173.

036 Mitchell, W.J. (2005). *Placing Words: Symbols, Space, and the City.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 3.

describe this special semiotic condition of some signs to mean different things depending on their position. For Eco, topo-sensitive is a sign that "acquires the fullness of its meaning only when certain circumstantial features (relating to its placement in this rather than that place) add additional meanings".[037] Where the sign is sitting and when it was produced or encountered affect its signification. A topo-sensitive sign owes its meaning to its "spatial or temporal co-ordinates": the "contextual position" of the sign is the "formator" of its meaning.[038] It is exactly this 'contextual position' of graffiti writings and their produced images that this dissertation explores.

Chmielewska introduces the concept 'semiotic landscape' from Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen to examine how graffiti develop in time and relate to their surroundings in particular contexts. Kress and van Leeuwen develop the term to study how different modes of communication interact with each other in a specific context as well as their uses and valuations in a given society. They note that "the features of a landscape only make sense in the context of their whole environment and of the history of its development".[039] In other words, each semiotic object needs to be examined in relation to the entirety of the other semiotic elements that surround it. It has to be studied in the particular moment and the specific society but without losing sight of its historical transformations. It is in the specific cultural, social, material and political situation that a semiotic object or practice produces meaning(s).

Every element of a semiotic landscape – whether a building, a toponymic sign or a graffito – is neither timeless nor has it one stable meaning. Each feature, according to Kress and van Leeuwen, "has its history, as does the landscape as a whole, and each is subject to constant remaking".[040] Kress and van Leeuwen base the notion of semiotic landscape on the cultural values of the society in question; they argue that it is these beliefs that induce people to produce the specific semiotic elements, arrange them in a particular way to construct and convey certain meanings. A semiotic landscape holds the elements within it together and allows them to be understood as a whole, as an entity. Ultimately, the semiotic landscape is a unique for each location layout of situated signs which, from their specific – albeit temporal – places, relate and interact with each other to produce meaning in a given society, in a specific moment.

037 Eco, U. (1979). *Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press. p. 186.

038 Eco, U. (1979). *Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press. p. 186.

039 Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge. p. 35.

040 Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge. p. 35.

0.1.4. An Atlas of Graffiti and Architecture: Key References and Design Methods

Apart from the works that this thesis uses as texts, there are some references that are used and thought through here as (design) methods. Visual culture scholar Ella Chmielewska has underlined the significance of the relationship between inscription and material substrate, as well as the importance of locality in the meanings that these writings convey. In her work, researching inscriptions as singular, situated signs is central. It also highlights the need to account for the local discourses, the special historical and material circumstances, as well as the urban surround of the inscription in question. Chmielewska's take on graffiti is an exemplar exception in the scholarship as it prompts us to carefully approach and critically examine writings in their contexts, considering how they function in situ. Especially her article *Framing [Con]text*, which studies graffiti in Montréal and Warsaw, is key in this thesis due to its methodological uniqueness.[041] In this essay – which is oft-cited for the theories it introduces but rarely for its format and special treatment of images – Chmielewska inserts throughout a surprising number of nearly fifty graffiti photographs, all of which share the same size and square format. The careful positioning of images gives raise to particular spatial relationships and interactions, while their sequence creates a kind of narrative. In a sense, Chmielewska brings in the journal pages the way graffiti images-texts operate. This means treating images and texts in a similar fashion; the visuals are located in specific places on the pages to be 'read' as (part of the) text. In the later article *Framing Temporality,* Chmielewska extends her focus from the materiality and place of writing to its temporal dimensions as dictated by the photographic medium.[042] In general, Chmielewska sees inscriptions as context-sensitive signs, and explores issues related to the modes of documentation, representation and circulation of graffiti images.

The most direct design reference for this dissertation regarding the sequential and spatial techniques of graffiti representation that it follows is the *Reichstag Graffiti* book which presents the inscriptions in the restored German parliament building.[043] In this self-promotional book – as its main purpose is to celebrate the synthetic virtuosity of its lead architect Norman Foster – the drawings and images are presented in a particular sequence that zooms-in: from the drawings we move to the specific photographic fragments indicated in the drawings. The drawings are a combination of line drawings interrupted by images of the curated graffiti on the walls. These images are presented in the subsequent pages in random magnitudes and positions on the sheet but in the right order and sequence. Every inscription of each photograph is translated and textually transcribed to the blank space of the page next to the image. The spatial correspondence between the texts and the photographed inscriptions allows us to read them.

Another reference used here both as text and theoretical image is Bruno Latour and Peter Wibel's edited volume *Iconoclash*.[044] What is particularly interesting in this book is the footnote technique used which brings the reference in a yellow line down to the space below and indexes it. Although the footnotes are numbered in the text, their reading at the bottom of the page is spatial, challenging the traditional linearity of the text. The references – which happen to be incidentally on the same page – start to participate in the iconoclash of the page as an extra dimension of the content and argument of the text. Conveyed in this very simple design gesture, the footnotes contribute to the destruction – and, by extension, the construction anew – of the matrix of the text while highlighting the potential re-spatialisation

041 Chmielewska, E. (2007). Framing [Con]text: Graffiti and Place. *Space and Culture, 10*(2), 145-169.

042 Chmielewska, E. (2009). Framing Temporality: Montréal Graffiti in Photography. In A. Gérin & J. S. McLean (Eds.), *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 271-292). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

043 Foster, N., Baker, F., & Lipstadt, D. (2003). *The Reichstag Graffiti / Die Reichstag-Graffiti* (D. Jenkins Ed.). Berlin: Jovis.

044 Latour B., & Weibel, P. (Eds.). (2002). *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

of thought and text. The book offers us not only a transferable indexing technique but also a conceptual image which allows us to draw parallels between the text and the architectural façade.

The last, and probably the most important, conceptual-methodological reference for this dissertation is Aby Warburg's unfinished work *Mnemosyne Atlas*. On sixty-three wooden tableaus (approximately 150x200cm each), all covered with black cloth, Warburg organises 'visual clusters'.[045] This happens when heterogeneous images from various sources, periods and regions are configured in particular ways to create all sorts of 'affinities', thus questioning the order of things, places and time. Art historian Georges Didi-Huberman considers Warburg's work to be a theoretical object and methodological device rather than a simple collection of images. For Didi-Huberman when images are carefully juxtaposed and placed in specific sequences have the capacity to produce unforeseeable connections, and this is what transforms the *Mnemosyne Atlas* into "a visual form of knowledge".[046] It is the careful sequencing and assembling that Didi-Huberman – who always talks about images in groups rather than individually – regards as methodologically rich. In the press release of his own Atlas exhibition, Didi-Huberman argues that "[to] make an atlas is to reconfigure space, to redistribute it, in short, to redirect it: to dismantle it where we thought it was continuous; to reunite it where we thought there were boundaries".[047] In that sense, atlases create a universe of their own, an architectural construction where the 'spaces' are suggested by the configuration and sequence of images. An atlas invites us to move from one image to the next, from one 'space' to another. In my atlas this means to travel from one inscription to the next, from one surface to the other, transcending geographical and/or temporal limitations thus enabling ruptures to institutional surfaces that attempt to capitalise or commodify graffiti.

Didi-Huberman considers the atlas "a reading machine" that is capable of allowing us "read what was never written".[048] The atlas points out what we see without seeing it: it is a revelatory instrument. 'To read what was never written' means to draw linkages between objects, places and times that were never been drawn. In that sense, atlases are like maps: they create sets of relationships that never been produced before because the material has never been looked in this particular way. When images are serialised and brought together in specific arrangements, we can discover new or expose the hidden relations they share. My atlas is a representative selection of emblematic pieces and key locations which, when they are dynamically assembled, enable us to identify new 'affinities' and demonstrate the correspondence between these writings and the particular contexts in which they appear. Yet, an atlas of inscriptions is by definition an atlas of surfaces. Selecting and curating visual material from seemingly unrelated places and eras, this research weaves a network of surfaces to suggest an Athenian 'graffiti landscape' where heterogeneous times, sites and inscriptions are concurrently at play.

My atlas serves a double function:[049] it is *heuristic* as it allows us to explore the surface conditions of each site and create connections that have never been made before, and it works *cartographically* as it resituates the writings in their geographical and temporal contexts enabling the navigation through the graffiti landscape. It is this careful study of the *placement* of graffiti that allows us orientate through the Athenian surfaces transforming the contemplation upon surfaces into a spatial endeavour, while the *graphic* articulation of the inscriptions gives raise to issues pertinent to the materiality and temporality of the specific writing situation thus suggesting different surface phenomena or inscriptive schemas.

045 Warburg, A. (2000/1929). *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne [Mnemosyne Atlas]* (M. Warnke Ed.). Berlin: Akademie Verlag Gmbh.

046 Didi-Huberman, G. (2010a). *Atlas: How to Carry the World on One's Back?* (S. B. Lillis, Trans.). Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. p. 14.

047 Didi-Huberman, G. (2010b). *Atlas exhibition press release.* Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. Available at: http://www.museoreinasofia.es/sites/default/files/notas-de-prensa/2010-004-dossier-en.pdf. Accessed: 20 December 2015. p. 2.

048 Didi-Huberman borrows this phrase from Walter Benjamin who has used it in his essay 'On the Mimetic Faculty'. Didi-Huberman, G. (2010a). *Atlas: How to Carry the World on One's Back?* (S. B. Lillis, Trans.). Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. p. 17, 23.

049 Moving away from its initial purpose – i.e. documenting the Earth or selected regions of it, and helping the mapping of and navigation through unexplored or unfamiliar territories – the notion 'atlas' has gradually become a synonym of a complete work on any subject which is usually richly illustrated.

Each architectural façade or elevated surface is governed by spatial rules and establishes particular parameters that dictate the way we read and measure it while affecting the *layouts* of the writings that occupy it and, by extension, the axis of their reading. As such, the graffiti content is *serialised* within the architectural setting as the matrix of graffiti belongs to the given matrix of the architecture.[050] So, graffiti image-texts are placed in a particular order and appear in specific groupings according to the rules of the architectural surface. In that way, each of my drawings is like a Warburg's tableau, i.e. a set of graffiti (images) positioned in relation to each other according to the imposed spatiality of architecture. Similarly, each text page is like a tableau where images are serialised in relation to the text. The pages-maps re-situate and re-serialise the graffiti content in architecture and the city, and in so doing, the thesis is a synthesis of these graffiti into a set of relationships as dictated by each architectural surface and the city of Athens. Ultimately, this Atlas is a series of mappings of graffiti in Athens where you can get – through any reading of a single inscription – the means through which you can become more careful in your reading of it, means by which you can understand its relationship with a larger set of images and the ways they function together in different assemblages and specific contexts.[051]

Graffiti's spatial relationship to architecture and the city – whose matrices are serialised in and stretch one another – is transferred here in the form of the atlas, reflected in the structure of the thesis and attentively examined in all case studies. It is to these *situations* and their *inscriptions* that we now turn.[052]

050 The understanding of the concept 'seriality' comes from the multiple discussions we had over the course of my doctoral studies with my supervisors and especially the following works: Wiszniewski, D. (Ed.). (2010). *Florence: Curating the City*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Wiszniewski, D. (2012). City as Museum, Museum as City: Mediating the Everyday and Special Narratives of Life. In S. Macleod, L. Hourston Hanks & J. Hale (Eds.), *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* (pp. 119-132). London: Routledge.

051 This was also our goal in Avramidis, K., & Tsilimpounidi, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City*. London: Routledge. p. 5.

052 My understanding of the concept 'situation' has been shaped by several conversations we had during the PhD with my supervisors and particularly framed by the following special issue: Wiszniewski, D., Chmielewska, E. & Kaminer, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Architecture & [Situation]*, 4. According to the editors' view – a view which I adopt here as well – the notion 'situation' refers to more than a locational condition. 'Situation' oscillates between the concrete and the abstract moving from inside out, i.e. from the particular to the general: "[it] describes connection of events between the outer, unlimited content and the inner, limited content".



0.2. Entering The Scene: Writing In And On Athens

0.2.1. The ‘No Respect’ Exhibition: Introducing Writing in Athens

The time is 2014 and the place is Athens. The city is in crisis for several years already and the walls are full of graffiti reflecting the Greek tensions. In this context, a prosperous foundation and some colourful artworks is the recipe to make the *No Respect* exhibition a success. This is the largest and most prestigious graffiti exhibition that Greece has ever seen. It is organised and financially supported by the Onassis Cultural Centre (henceforth OCC), and lasts for three months (11 April - 13 July 2014). Prior to the exhibition, the OCC issues an open call for participants through which the 40 interested artists are selected. A masterly directed video is circulated online inviting artists to submit their applications – which should be accompanied by a portfolio and a bio – to be considered for the show.[053]

The ‘No Respect’ takes place in the large open plan exhibition space at the basement of the imposing OCC headquarters building in Syngrou Avenue,[054] which was designed by the French firm Architecture Studio and completed in 2011. The participants of the exhibition range from signature graffiti writers and abstract muralists to stencil street artists, each of whom has been allocated a space of 3.00x4.00m in advance (two 1.50x4.00m panels per artist). There are some exceptions as some writers are asked to paint the columns of the space or other elements which are brought inside to convey a street atmosphere. Exclusively on each allocated space the individual artists, or groups of artists, execute their pieces. For nearly a month (March - April 2014) the exhibition hall of the OCC is transformed into a large graffiti atelier rather than an Athenian street which was the original intention.[055] This is the case because only a number of max three artists could paint at the same time for health and safety reasons (e.g., ventilation, etc.). This results to ‘respect’ on the writers’ behalf for each other’s allocated space, a fact that undermines the aim and decreases the expectations of the final aesthetic product. As the corresponding drawing of the exhibition evinces, the outcome is a series of pieces sitting in perfect order the one next to the other, each bearing the signature style of its producer. The minimum spatial references of the basement – i.e. the columns and the grid suggested by the prepared panels – manage to force the pieces to completely conform to them. Apart from the spatial conformity, there is conformity in regards to the chosen topics too: in stark contrast to the writings on the walls of Athens, the pieces of the exhibition are neither political in content nor reproduce images or themes of the crisis.

Internationally renowned Greek artist iNO is invited to create – with his trademark style – the stunning, 10-meter height artwork ‘Creasing’. This adorns the south-west corner of the foundation’s façade facing Syngrou Avenue, welcoming those entering the city centre from the south suburbs. At the same time, iNO’s work signals and advertises the exhibition to the whole city. Of course, the piece is not executed directly on the pristine white marble slabs which characterise the exterior of the Onassis centre but on a prepared – and designated for that specific purpose – continuous vinyl surface. After all, the institution would not tolerate any graffiti on its walls unless it comes from a celebrated artist and could be curated. Witnessing this large graffiti piece on the pure and neat façade of the recently implemented OCC headquarters building – the

053 Available at: https://vimeo.com/81826797. Accessed: 5 January 2014.

054 The edifice sits in Syngrou Avenue which has historically attracted a number of important financial and cultural institutions and is the place where many of them reside, such as the newly renovated National Museum of Modern Art. The OCC is situated almost opposite to the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences and adjacent to the recently erected National Insurance Company HQ building.

055 The 10-minute long video documenting the preparation of the whole thing evinces the similarities between OCC’s basement before the exhibition and that of an artistic studio. The video was in display during the exhibition. Available at: https://vimeo.com/92726849. Accessed: 18 January 2016.

The massive work 'Creasing' by famous Greek graffitist iNO occupies the exterior of the Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014.

001
Z01



Mixed media piece 'Faμε' by artist Nar in the 'No Respect' Exhibition, Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014.

002
Z01



The 'Wall of Fame' at the entrance of the 'No Respect' Exhibition, Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014.

003
Z01





004

The invitation for the 'No Respect' Exhibition opening.



005
Z01

Lots of artists and graffiti enthusiasts enjoy their drink surrounded by disrespectful creativity and under the sounds of the invited DJ during the exhibition opening on 11.04.2014.

056

For example, see the extensive photographic coverage of the opening from Lifo free press. Staveris, S. (2014). No Respect: The Opening at the Onassis Cultural Centre. *Lifo*, 15 April.

The frontwoman of the Swing Shoes band poses in the 'No Respect' graffiti exhibition at Onassis Cultural Centre. ca 05.2015.

006
Z01





007
Z01

Three women in fancy dresses get excited in the view of the graffiti in the 'No Respect' exhibition opening.

wannabe cathedral of the high arts in Greece – creates a kind of shock thus perfectly serving its provocative and radical purpose whilst attracting attention **[001]**.

At the very entrance of the exhibition, Nar's artwork reading 'Faμε' dominates **[002]**. This unconventional, mixed-media piece mocks the very core of signature graffiti, i.e. fame. In a sense, it raises questions regarding the relevance of these kinds of events in times of crisis, the role of the graffitists in this institutionalised context and the situation of their artworks. The fact that the English letter 'm' is replaced with its Greek equivalent 'μ' makes it even more caustic as it indirectly implies that graffiti has given some artists 'to eat' ('φαμε' in Greek). Its position directly opposite to a wall including the tags of all the participating artists – a 'wall of fame' in the graffitists' argot – makes it even more sarcastic and paradoxical **[003]**. Entering the main exhibition hall, nearly every inch of the space – including walls, floor, columns, etc. – is covered with graffiti, tags, paint splashes and so on. Even cars are brought in and painted to enhance the feeling of the street.

The aim of 'No Respect' is to attract a young 'alternative' audience that would not otherwise visit the OCC, one that is familiar with and sympathetic to this kind of illicit urban imagery. In order to achieve this goal, the exhibition seeks to draw a connection with the streets and capture the dynamism of the graffiti phenomenon as it manifests on the Athenian walls by replicating its aesthetics indoors. In so doing, however, the exhibition undermines graffiti's critical potency transforming it into an aesthetic object and empty gesture. In 'No Respect' graffiti is detached from its actual political and historical context – that of the Athenian streets – and is inserted into another context – that of the gallery – governed by different rules of viewing and ways of being: it is *de-situated*. Due to the dissociation of graffiti from their original contexts, they become something different: visually arresting but completely devoid of meaning signs.

The exhibition opens on 11.04.2014 and is undoubtedly a success **[004]**. Apart from the artists, their relatives and friends, lots of people from the art scene and intellectual life of Athens attend the event to admire the disrespectful impulses of the local graffitists while enjoying their drink and listening to the music **[005]**. The opening attracts the media and results to images that convey glamour and look as if they were taken in a gallery that hosts a celebrated fine artist.[056] In the following days, lots of people visit the exhibition, are photographed next to the artworks and then post these images online. This is the case with the female singer of the 'Swing Shoes' band **[006]**: as she lays back – in an almost sensual fashion – her multicolour dress blends with the colourful bubble letters of the painted Mercedes, as if it was made especially for her. The proliferation of this kind of imagery from the exhibition disconnects the writings from their primary political context thus presenting graffiti as generic, aesthetically pleasant images, devoid of their critical power. Images of people in fancy dresses and hipster haircuts posing in front of graffiti pieces start circulating in the press, thus demonstrating the 'positive' side of graffiti in a city that suffers from its omnipresence **[007]**. These photographs and the way they appear in various online environments are exemplar of how graffiti images (and probably images in general) are constantly used, if not exploited, facilitating any kind of (visual) discourse and (political) rhetoric to be more compelling and, by extension, persuasive.

The circulation of 'positive' graffiti images creates an ambiguity on whether graffiti is autonomous or controlled by specific institutions. In a sense, it becomes unclear what is the relationship of all sorts of authorities with graffiti in contemporary crisis: do they suppress or promote it? Or, do they suppress it by promoting it? Is this commissioning strategy an attempt to deprive


International New York Times

Assad's plan for election reveals new confidence

Ukraine confronts pro-Russia rebels in east

Anguish turns to art in Greece's capital

Signs of an economic slowdown accumulate in China

The New York Times front page in 15.04.2014 dedicated to Athenian graffiti.

Alderman, L. (2014). Across Athens, Graffiti Worth a Thousand Words of Malaise. *New York Times*, 15 April. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/world/europe/across-athens-graffiti-worth-a-thousand-words-of-malaise.html. Accessed: 10 January 2015. 008

057


The New York Times

'Taki 183' Spawns Pen Pals

The famous New York Times front page of 21.06.1971 is dedicated to the godfather of graffiti, Greek-born Taki 183.

058

Charles, D. H. (1971). Taki 183 Spawns Pen Pals. *New York Times*, 21 July. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/1971/07/21/archives/taki-183-spawns-pen-pals.html. Accessed: 10 December 2015. 009

graffiti from its political meaning so as to control and neutralise it? Four days after the exhibition opening, the New York Times dedicate their front page to Athenian graffiti **[008]**. In the article 'Across Athens, graffiti worth a thousand words of malaise', columnist Liz Alderman includes several images of the 'No Respect' exhibition, skyrocketing the reputation of graffiti in Athens.[057] This creates associations to the writers' minds with the famous Taki 183 article[058] that appeared on the cover of the same newspaper more than 40 years ago **[009]**. Alderman's article, apart from the views of two exhibition participants (iNO and Cacao Rocks), hosts the views of Amalia Zeppou – the advisor of Athens mayor and responsible for the graffiti permit programme in Athens – who, in her unfortunate statement, argues that:

> [W]hen a city collapses, and has been tagged everywhere, we have an obligation to stop it. Once graffiti becomes commissioned art, it is a signal of the beginning of the end of the financial or social crisis that the city has gone through.

This statement could not reveal more emphatically how deterministically associated crisis and graffiti are in Athens. Graffiti writing is seen as the visual synonym and material embodiment of the crisis. Advisor Zeppou admits that commissioned graffiti is considered to be a successful strategy deployed, or at least promoted, by the municipality. In her view, a graffiti-free – or at least graffiti-controlled – Athens would signal that the city is recovering from the crisis. In a sense, the eradication of illicit graffiti imagery is equated with the return to 'normality'. What is at stake here is graffiti's illegal aesthetic and political connotations. Once commissioned, graffiti cease being acts of dissent and are turned into aesthetic commodities ready for consumption. In this type of graffiti consumption contributes the very situation they are in that reduces their inherent power to criticize the surfaces upon which they rest and what these places represent or stand for: graffiti are neutralised. Even though graffiti is by nature antithetical to orthodoxies, it starts becoming one when it is presented in a gallery – instituted by an institution as art – in the city of Athens in a very politically and economically vulnerable moment, when graffiti in its true power is needed the most. It seems that the institutions bring in those means of radical expression and mute them as mere aestheticisation.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue 'pack' consisting of three books.[059] The first photographically documents the artworks produced in the context of the exhibition, each of which comes together with the signature of its producer taken from the 'wall of fame'. The pieces here are not presented in the sequence they appear in the exhibition but alphabetically – most possibly to avoid potential skirmishes between graffitists on who appears first – thus further underlying how the institution treats the participants, i.e. as artists. The second book presents urban interventions executed by the participating graffitists. Apart from the images' credits and the chronologies of their production, however, not a single allusion is being made regarding the placement of each graffito in the city thus reducing them into mere artistic styles. The last book consists of texts. It includes the curatorial statement and four short academic essays – including one from the author – that discuss graffiti in more general terms rather than talking about the exhibition per se **[010]**. The three components of the catalogue show the relations between discourse (text), city (artists) and the curated moment that happened in the OCC (exhibition). The book interweaves the institution with – and, in the process, legitimises its position in – the graffiti

059

Karra, M. (Ed.). (2014). *No Respect*. Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre.



010

The three books of the 'No Respect' exhibition catalogue. Designed by graffitists-exhibitors duo Studio-Empire.

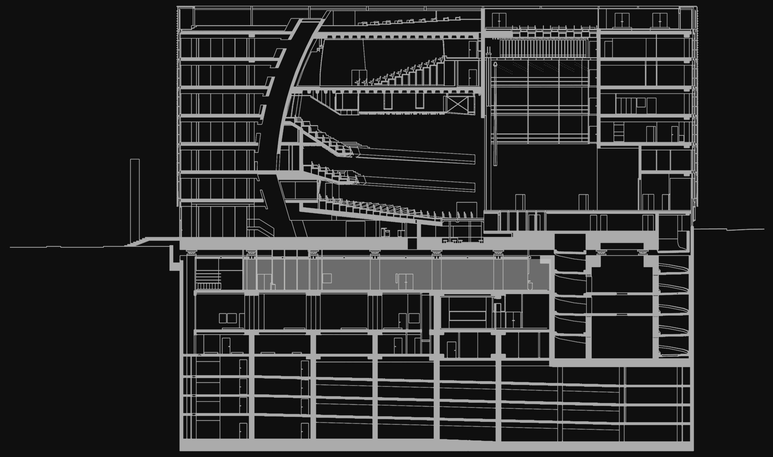
scholarship and the graffiti production in the city. By bringing together specific images and texts, the book (de)politicises in a unique way three graffiti-related domains: graffiti's outside wild practice, graffiti's commodified expression and the commentary on graffiti.

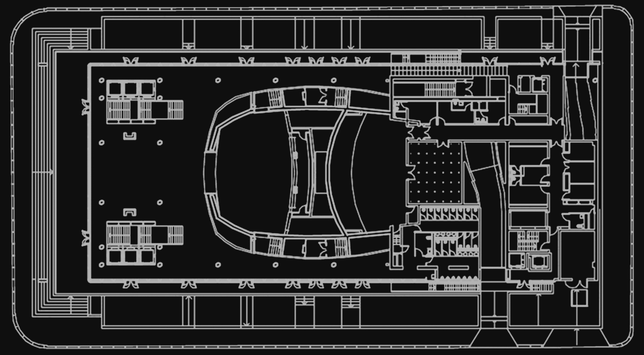
The catalogue is launched for the first time on 6.6.2014 to coincide with the one-day-long *(Dis)respectful Creativity* conference. Just a month before the end of the exhibition, the OCC organises this parallel event by inviting several leading graffiti scholars and practitioners from around the globe to share their views on the impact of this practice on contemporary society and urban space.[060] It seems that the same thing that happened in the crisis-ridden NYC of the early 1970s – i.e. promoting and co-opting graffiti by commissioning and showcasing particular works in gallery settings – is now taking place in the Athens of memoranda. Even the protagonists are the same. Hugo Martinez – the first person ever involved in graffiti curatorial practices – is invited to the OCC symposium to share his experience from the early days of NYC's graffiti in the galleries.

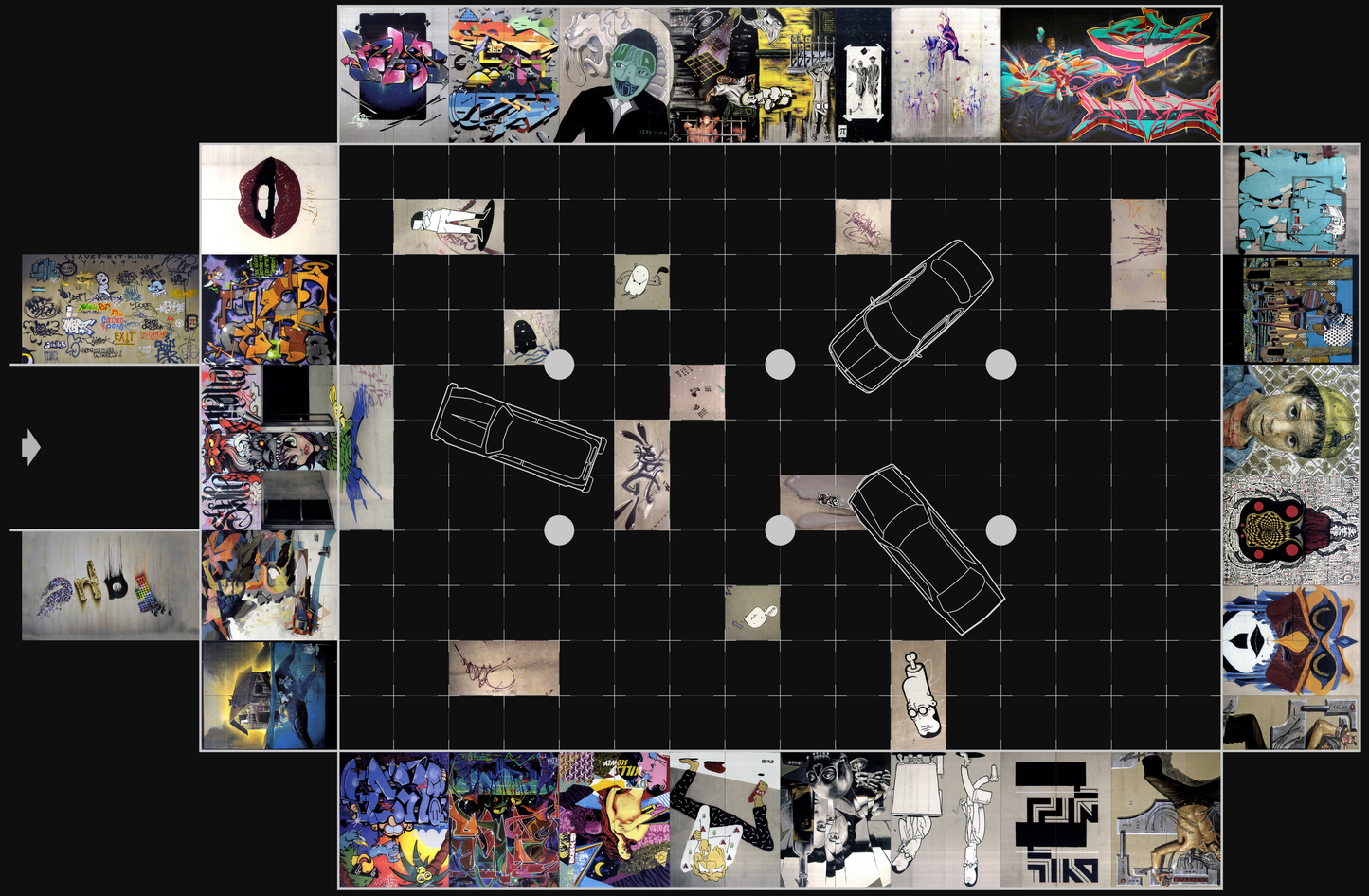
The symposium takes place in the spectacular lecture theatre on the fifth floor while the audience consists of primarily graffitists (and that's the reason why the early morning sessions are not very well attended!). The whole thing is full of contradictions causing controversy. For instance, this is a graffiti event organised by an anti-graffiti foundation and takes place in an anti-graffiti building which, except for its anti-graffiti architecture, has security systems in 24h operation (e.g., security guards, CCTV, etc.). Recognising the paradoxical nature of their situation, graffitists denounce in every possible occasion to their peers the institutionalisation of graffiti while concurrently announcing that they 'do it for the money' but accepting the generous sponsorship of the OCC. Probably the most emblematic moment in this series of contradictions is the situation when, in a desperate move, the same artists who earlier got paid to produce their commissioned pieces at the OCC's basement try to undermine the aestheticisation of graffiti by tagging the chair backs in the prestigious auditorium where the conference takes place. This is one of the reasons why this event has a privileged position in this research: it provides the perfect entry point to the contradictions surrounding graffiti while situating this thesis in its spatial, temporal and political context.

060
The symposium is divided in three sessions each of which examines graffiti's relation to space, society and art. Available at: http://www.sgt.gr/eng/SPG1032/?vid=1_8tk-9k63f&pg=5&flt=151. Accessed: 25 September 2015.

0.2.2-01, OCC Physical Texts [1:50]







0.2.3. Taking Positions: Situating Writing on Athens

A lot of 'positioning' happens in the OCC during these events. The graffitists position their work indoors but themselves – as illicit artists – outdoors; the academics as 'experts' take positions in favour of graffiti; the curator spatially distribute and materially orchestrate the positions and performances of all these 'players'. However, another player that largely contributes to the meaning that the graffiti convey is taken for granted: architecture. OCC's architectural matrix is treated as an unimportant parameter, even though it is in this specific spatial situation and material condition that these events signify. After all, the physical graffiti pieces are produced in and conform to this particular architectonic space, while the graffiti images are projected on the surfaces of the auditorium interacting with its particular architectural environment.

The exhibition and conference are both presented in a curated form within a spectacular architectural structure making their spatial connotations quite interesting. Artists and scholars do not hold the same 'status' in the OCC: the former – the actual protagonists – are positioned downstairs whereas the latter are positioned upstairs. In so doing, this staged upstairs-downstairs situation politicises graffiti in a very specific way as it considers graffiti subordinate to the scholarship it produces. All these emphatically demonstrate the importance of each specific situation in graffiti's production and signification.

I actively participated as a graffitist in the exhibition downstairs and facilitated the organisation of as well as contributed to the international conference upstairs as a writer on graffiti in my expertise as an architectural designer. This discloses my deeply personal implication in this field and how I am politically situated in this research: an insider of graffiti, architecture and Athens. As such, I develop this research in a *three-fold manner*: as *architectural designer*, one with an impulse to survey by drawing and capable of grasping the matrix of the surfaces upon which graffiti finds an expression; as *graffiti writer*, somebody with some practical experience hence partially equipped to decode the graffiti matrix placed on any given architectural matrix; and as *writer on graffiti*, who is interested in bringing together and working between the architectural and graffiti matrices to reveal their convergences, deviations and interdependences, and, in so doing, expose the hidden spatiality of graffiti writing.

In the OCC I struggle with my position as an architect, graffiti writer and writer on graffiti, but somehow feel connected to all these different aspects of my identity. In this very place I have a firsthand experience of the challenges projected on the practice of graffiti and the questions emerging from it. My position in this research derives from my involvement in the OCC exhibition, conference and catalogue.

In the exhibition, it became clear to me that the aesthetics of graffiti is the characteristic which is the most exposed to appropriation, exploitation and cooptation. This valuable lesson led me avoid discussing the aesthetics and focus on the situations in which graffiti appears. The problem of graffiti out of its original context (e.g., in gallery settings) and issues related to conservation of graffiti were also first thought in the occasion of the OCC exhibition. One of the most crucial and revealing moments was once the exhibition was over and the painted panels were looking for a new life. The participating graffitists were invited to collect their panels before being removed from the exhibition space and destroyed.[061] To the best of my knowledge, apart from a single graffitist, all the rest responded negatively to the invitation due to the scale, cost and storage issues

In a press interview, the curator of the *No Respect* exhibition claims that the initial plan was to organise a party and destroy the works together with the artists to highlight their ephemeral character. Due to their "beauty", as the curator argues, it has been decided to offer the graffitied surfaces to various charitable bodies. This fact further highlights the status of the works as art. The planned donation of the artworks to charities, however, was never implemented salvaging them from becoming mere adornments while underscoring once more the impossibility of (re)moving graffiti from its surface of application. For more details about the fate of the OCC exhibition artworks see Papa, M. (2014). No Respect. *Lifo*, 9 April. [in Greek].

061

associated to this ambitious move. After all, graffiti are situated signs making little or no sense when transferred elsewhere. Is this eventually the destiny of graffiti in the gallery, i.e. ending up recycled material? But don't the gallery graffiti reach their political peak when they die, namely when the surfaces that host them become rubbles?

Perhaps the only way to actually present graffiti in the gallery is what graffitist Akim has done with his parody work entitled 'Leistungsschau' which graffiti scholar Rafael Schacter has provocatively screened in his presentation during the OCC conference.[062] This artwork is a pile of rubble coming from the removal of a wall which has originally been graffitied outdoors. The artist considers this to be the only manner for graffiti to exist in a gallery setting whilst underlining the symbiotic relationship that graffiti and its surface of application share and, at the same time, making a powerful comment on the attempted cooptation of this practice. These ideas about graffiti's unique, material and situated nature were originally thought in the context of the exhibition and expressed for the first time in the OCC catalogue. As discussed in the previous subsection, the catalogue is also used here as a conceptual image relating the institution with the practice of graffiti by bringing together the graffiti discourse, the city and the exhibition. In a sense, the catalogue disclosed my triple role in the OCC events – as participant in the exhibition, writer in the city outside and writer on the writings produced inside as well as outside – and dictated the three-fold development of this thesis. This is all to highlight the impact that the OCC's different graffiti 'outputs' have on this dissertation. The OCC, to a large extent, generated the current work: it framed my critical position and, by extension, this work's articulation came as a response to the issues deriving from the exhibition.

The aim of this project is to make sure that graffiti in Athens is not exploited by institutions and individuals that seek to undermine its critical potential. It attempts to shift the focus from the aesthetic dynamism of graffiti – its most commonly misused characteristic – to its material sophistication and site-specificity. The goal is to salvage graffiti from its misappropriation by considering what is often missing when graffiti becomes a subject of study, i.e. its *situating character* and *graphic treatment*. This presupposes a focus on the architectural surface upon which the graphism takes place and is serialised. After all, the physical surface provides not only the material background for writing – which confines and, in a sense, dictates the material and visual result of the writing – but also its historical and political situation – which contributes to what the writing conveys.

The OCC exhibition demonstrates that it is in the very particular situation that graffiti signify. This given, the thesis challenges the conventional perception that graffiti are irrespective of their contexts. In order to understand the conditions that engender these writings and the parameters that affect their meanings, the study examines the sites and material surfaces upon which they appear, as well as the events and circumstances during which they are executed. Since neither sites and materials nor spatial and visual communication practices – such as wall writing – are a-cultural or a-historical, cultural specificity and historical development are taken into account to understand how they function in different contexts. For example, all the graffiti in Athens seem to have a placement due to an inheritance of the route of resistance.[063] My drawings show how all the key architectures examined here (Detention Centre, Athens Polytechnic, Bank of Greece) relate to and are parts of the traditional protest route in the Greek capital. Unsurprisingly, the only building that does not belong to the demonstration route is the Onassis Cultural

062
Schacter, R. (2014b). Double Trouble Rubble. In *(Dis) respectful Creativity Conference: The Impact of Graffiti & Street Art on Contemporary Society & Urban Spaces*. Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre. For more details on the specific artwork by Akim see Schacter, R. (2013). *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. p. 207.

063
Since WWII, and especially during *Metapolitefsi* (1974 onwards), Athens' city centre main axes are the epicentres of political protests. Panepistimiou Avenue together with Patission and Stadiou Streets are main demonstration arteries in the Greek capital. The demonstrations' pattern in Athens is highly predictable and ritualistic, following some specific, historically grounded, conventions. John Parkinson, in his book *Democracy and Public Space* which examines how forms of democratic civil claims are performed in various physical sites around the world, reports that one finds two traditional protest routes in Athens. The majority of the *union-driven* rallies gather at Pedion Areos Square (intersection of Alexandras and Patission Avenues) then move from Patission Street to Omonoia Square, then turn to Stadiou Street heading towards Syntagma Square and return back from Panepistimiou Avenue. The *party-led* demonstrations follow a shorter, equally predictable, route: a marching circuit from Stadiou Street to Syntagma Square and back to Panepistimiou Avenue. The main differences among them are the gathering and termini points. The supporters of conservative New Democracy gather at Syntagma Square (in front of the Greek Parliament); the Socialist Party PaSoK gathers at Klafthmonos Square (Stadiou and Korai Street); the Greek Communist Party KKE supporters meet at Kotzia Square (at Aiolou Street, extension of Patission Street opposite to the Town Hall) or at Omonoia Square, while the radical left coalition SyRizA in front of the University building at Panepistimiou Avenue (where it intersects with Korai Street). For more details see Parkinson, J. (2012). *Democracy and Public Space: The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 150.

Centre. The institution seems to acknowledge and take into account the presence of such a resistance route when choosing the placement of its headquarters in the urban fabric. This intentional positioning might be made by the institution in an attempt to distance itself from the politically charged, historically dissenting and currently decaying Athens city centre. On the other hand, the Detention Centre is right in the vortex of it but, again, not on the route.

Since architecture is presented as the consensual image of civil society, graffiti – by its forceful occupation of architecture – is by extension seen as an act of dissent. The drawings (especially) reveal the privileged position of graffiti and architecture in Athens as sites of a recurring tension between the matrices of *dissensus* and *consensus*. My work deconstructs the mythology that architecture represents consensus and graffiti represents dissensus, as architecture can be dissenting and graffiti can be consenting. Since architecture is the material embodiment of the institutions, the architectural matrices of the specific edifices stand for their institutions. By intervening on the surface of architecture, graffiti aims to rupture the corresponding institution in the specific situation. The Bank of Greece, the Athens Polytechnic, the Detention Centre and the Onassis Gallery correspond to institutional voices that are presented as matrices of power: matrices of economy, education, justice and culture respectively. These are institutions in and on which graffiti takes place because there is something within society that is requiring the rupturing of these situations. Yet, these situations are nuanced, interconnected and complicated. For example, in the Detention Centre there might be the simple idea of dissent of the person who is incarcerated but the detainees are also dissenting against a whole lot of things. Beyond their own state of confinement, they dissent against the very fact that somebody occupies Athens, seizing the Athenians' architecture to hold them within it and using architecture to restrict them from having a voice. When you are in the Detention Centre where you are allowed to say nothing other than you've been taught to say when being interrogated, the margins of operation are very limited. Since you cannot say anything what you are left to say – or rather, write – is solely your (nick)name. So the matrix of architecture is being abused and so graffiti is bursting out of the scenes of architecture because it has to. Probably the Detention Centre is the most extreme case. The other cases are just examples of the same degree of dissent and consent. The Athens Polytechnic – in its Beaux Art form – is an institution of education preparing student to become the next generation of intellects and cultural evaluators, pushing the country forward due to their open mindedness towards civil rights. In the context of the Dictatorship, they recognise that they have been stripped off their liberty rights and, by defacing their own institution, dissent against those in power to tell to that they are no longer having a voice in the university. The Bank of Greece is a very clear target. Greece, and Athens in particular, is being plundered – as all the other places in the capitalist system – and that's why people are dissenting. In each case there is also consensus: somebody lets the occupying forces in; the Polytechnic students did not react earlier and are the bourgeois of the future, the same people (or their descendants) who are actually writing on the walls of the Bank, and so on. Architecture and graffiti are in corroboration of and collaboration with each other, engaging and negotiating the boundaries of their mutual matrices. The Onassis gallery is the least radicalised and most conformed case of all, where graffiti is denuded of any critical potency. The institution neutralises art as aesthetic object and in the gallery, in a sense, we witness the conformity of dissent.

The sites clearly differ in regards to the publicness and architectural orders of the space that host graffiti: the ones in the Detention Centre are inscribed exclusively in an interior space; the writings of the Athens Polytechnic appear both in the interior and the exterior of the buildings; those on the Bank of Greece occupy solely the outside of the; while the ones in the OCC gallery are interior. The Detention Centre has the most intensity, weirdly because it is the least architectural due to its utter interiority. The intensity of that space is proportionate to the absence of other spatial references. In any case, all these marks frame the situated surfaces of the specific political edifices upon which they rest.

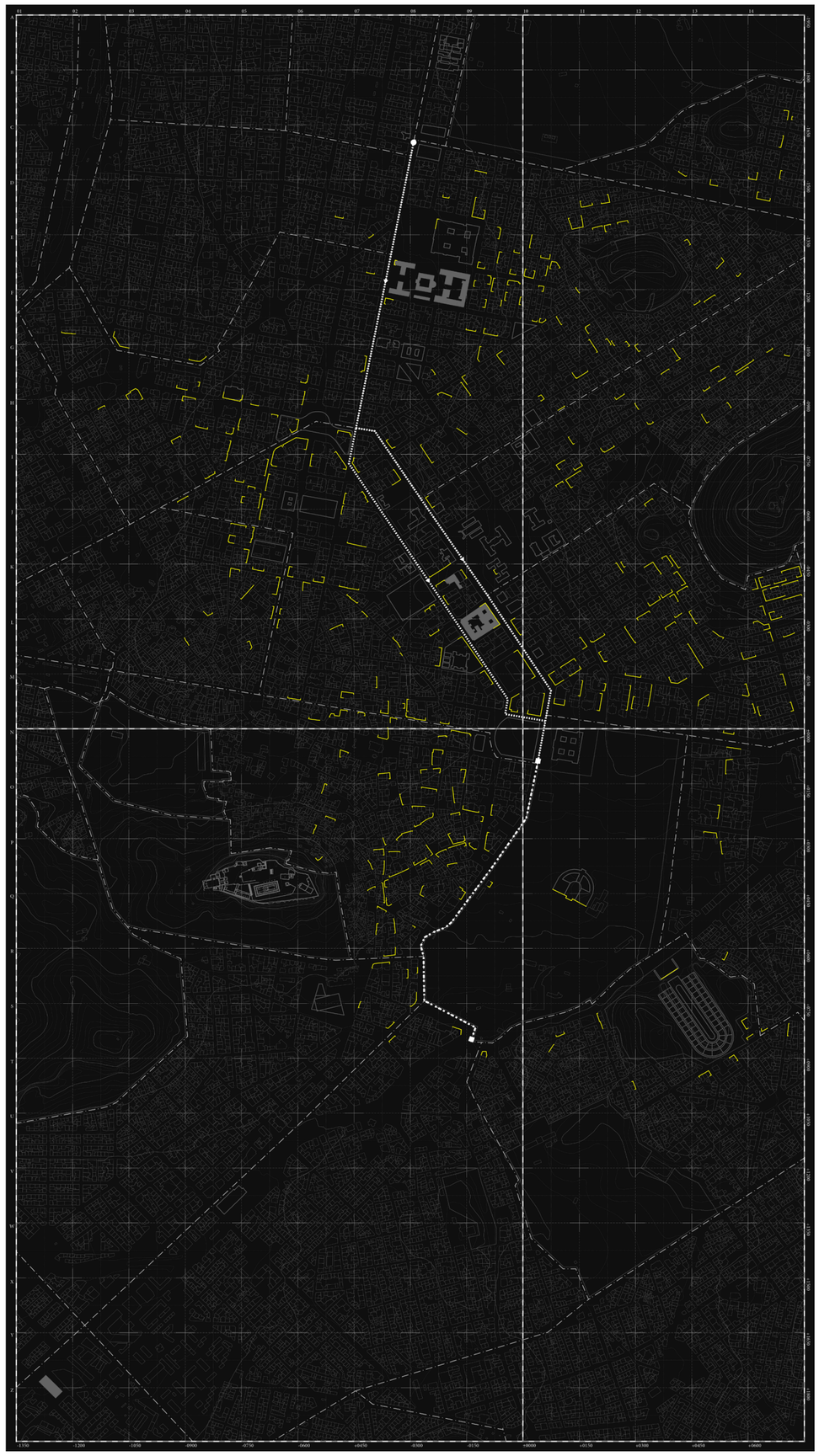
The way these situations are recorded and presented is crucial in the understanding of each situation in a completely different way. By fastidiously (re)drawing these inscriptions, particular surface conditions are revealed suggesting distinct graphic-rupturing 'systems' as characteristic to each situation: *hieroglyphic*, *palimpsestic* and *iconoclastic* for the Detention Centre, the Athens Polytechnic and the Bank of Greece respectively. The *hieroglyphic* is concerned with the peculiar adjacency between images and texts that graffiti suggest; the *palimpsestic* examines primarily the overlay of writings and their 'contamination' from each other; while the *iconoclastic* explores the surface as a field of destruction where opposing sides and gestures – such as defacement and refacement – meet. These critical terms are *inter-applicable* in graffiti allowing something of the radical and critical power of each situation to be transferred onto the other.

The thesis offers an alternative reading of Athens which is often seen through its classical structure. Turning our focus on the culturally marginal or urban quotidian has the capacity to reveal what is hidden in plain sight. Graffiti, by its marginal position, is capable of critiquing urban processes and the institutions upon the surfaces of which it takes place. This thesis attempts to narrate specific moments of this critique by design means. In the city where critique was born, all these parietal writings can be seen as supplementary to the writings constituting the epistemology of political critique.

The 'atlas of Athenian inscriptions' is a means for restoring the broken, whilst creating new, links between writings and their surfaces. The Atlas seeks to reconstitute the Athenian graffiti landscape by resituating the inscriptions in a newly charged conceptual environment. The situations that this thesis places in series with the OCC exhibition give critical voice to how graffiti is perceived now as a cultural phenomenon.




ΣΗΤΩ
ΠΕΡΙΟ



1.1. Setting The Scene: Writing In Occupation

The opening photograph offers a condensed visual introduction to the graphic treatment of the writing situation under question in this chapter. It is from the basements of the former Nazi detention centre at 4 Korai Street, a place of martyrdom for organised members of the Greek National Resistance as well as several civilians and petty criminals. Contrary to the graffiti on the walls of Athens during the Occupation – consisting of colourful words, letters or initials, produced with paint and aiming to call to arms – the writings in the detention centre are inscribed with a stylus and their main purpose is to mark the existence of the inmates. The image depicts a detained human figure asking for water. Yet, our reading of the image can be complicated if we think that what appear to be prison bars might have initially been drawn as calendar lines in order to count the days in custody which have later been re-appropriated by another detainee. Further, the two 'words' are misspelled but, most interestingly, the first letter is written backwards thus creating a shape that doesn't exist in Greek language. In other words, this seemingly simple image immediately opens up subjects that go beyond what appears to be straightforward.

The inscriptions literally stem from and are fused with the surface. Writings and lines allude to shapes and form images. These inscriptions are neither linguistic signs nor figurative marks but something in between, thus making us read them as hieroglyphics. These crude carvings seem to be desperate traces of existence inscribed on the dark walls of a dungeon. To a certain extent, these are non-representations due to their entirely gestural nature. In a sense, these hastily inscribed marks image mere existence. This suggests that the surface is witnessing events and its traces have the capacity to testify presences and absences, allowing us to either retrieve or imagine what happened somewhere to someone. These enigmatic hieroglyphics invite us to decipher the historical and spatial conditions of their creation while forcing us to rethink the relationship between images and texts.

1.1.1. 'Vinceremo?': Artistic Testimonies[064] of the Practice of Wall Writing

Prominent architectural historian Kostas Bires argues that during the Axis Occupation of Greece wall writing is a common practice of resistance usually undertaken by brave youths so as to humiliate the Nazi forces.[065] He also informs us that the practice of wall writing enrages the Occupation army to such an extent that whenever they encounter slogans on walls they force either the tenants of the building or even random passerby to erase them immediately.

The film *Soldiers without Uniform* – a movie that refers to Occupied Athens – could not illustrate more vividly how embarrassing and irritating wall writing is for the Axis army and its collaborators.[066] In a scene, a Greek collaborationist and a German military official witness some slogans written on the edifice opposite to their offices. The slogans on the wall – which offend the Occupiers and are signed by resistance organisations – read: 'Long Live Freedom - EDES', 'Death to Huns - IT', 'Bulgarians Out - EAM'.[067] Outside the building a young woman is cleaning the windows. One of the officials approaches her aggressively and asks her to immediately erase the

066 Ioannopoulos, D. (1960). *Soldiers without Uniform.* Athens: IFA Films. [in Greek].

065 Bires, K. (2005/1966). *Athens from the 19th to the 20th Century.* Athens: Melissa. [in Greek]. p. 338.

067 Among the most famous and active resistance organisations that spring up during the Axis occupation of Greece are the following: EAM: 'The National Liberation Front' is the main, most active and famous resistance organisation with its driving force being the Communist Party of Greece (KKE); ELAS: 'The Greek People's Liberation Army' is the military arm of EAM; EPON: 'The United Panhellenic Organization of Youth' is the youth wing of EAM; EDES: 'The National Republican Greek League' is the second larger resistance group after EAM. EDES comes into confrontation with the ELAS, beginning a series of civil conflicts that would continue during the Greek Civil War; IT: 'The Sacred Brigade' is one of the major resistance groups, famous for its sabotages. It closely collaborated with PEAN, i.e. 'The Panhellenic Union of Fighting Youths'; EES: 'The Greek National Army' is an anti-communist, nationalist organisation aiming to be the armed countervailing force of ELAS; X: 'The Organisation X' is a notorious far-right paramilitary organisation which is set up during the Axis occupation. Initially, the group's name was 'Grivas Military Organization' and in March 1943 it was renamed, adopting the letter of the Greek alphabet chi from the George's II royal monogram (X). Organisation X is involved in the persecution of non-monarchists during and after the occupation and considered communism to be its principal enemy.

064 After Baharian, A., & Antaios, P. (1995/1986). *Artistic Testimonies: Painting-Engraving in War, Occupation and Resistance* (3rd ed.). Athens: Odysseas. [in Greek].

Film snapshot showing the collaborationist threatening the occupant of the building to clean the walls right away.

011



068

Dimitriadis, F. (2004/1946). *Shadow over Athens: 77 Sketches from the Nazi Occupation* (L. Galati & M. Grammenou Eds.). Athens: Modern Times. [in Greek].

Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Lick it Until It's Clean' sketch from the 'Shadow over Athens' series (1946). Ink on paper.

012





013

Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Long Live Freedom' sketch from the 'Shadow over Athens' series (1946). Ink on paper.

069

The Huns were a Mongolian warlike nomadic tribe which has lived in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and thrived during the 4th century AD. 'The Huns' was used in Occupied Greece as a derogatory nickname for the Germans, a kind of synonym for barbarians. Probably, its aim was to insult the German ethnogenesis' interpretation which was based on the thought superiority of the Aryan race.

070

Burke, P. (2001). *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. London: Reaktion. p. 83.

Ilias Fertis (1943). 'The Brave Ones: The Wall Writers of Greek Axis Occupation'. Oil on canvas. 88x92cm.

014
G11



071

The closed shutters of the typical two-storey neoclassical buildings that are represented in the painting most likely allude to, or at least indirectly connote, the moment when the Germans entered Athens and the majority of the citizens closed their windows' blinds as the parade was developing to show that the Axis army is not welcome. This is considered to be the very first, albeit symbolic, act of defiance in Occupied Athens.

graffiti while threatening her that he would otherwise force her to clean them with her tongue [011].

Famous Greek sketcher Fokion Dimitriadis, in his book *Shadow over Athens* includes 77 sketches which document – in a quite realistic representational manner – everyday scenes he experienced or exceptional events he witnessed during the Occupation.[068] His sketches show the cruelty of the Occupation army and praise the bravery of the Greeks who resisted. At the same time, they capture the urban visual landscape and provide access to the practice of and the attitudes towards wall writing during the Axis Occupation. Among these series, there is one sketch that depicts an Italian soldier who, by pointing his gun, forces an elder passerby to clean a slogan from a wall by licking it with his tongue [012]. The slogan reads 'Vinceremo' and has a big question mark on top of it, thus questioning who the winner is. Interestingly, the way the elder is presented approaching the surface, refers more to religious worship rather than anything else. The fact that the elder holds the hat on his hand – as a sign of respect – together with his body posture – which looks as if he is kissing an Orthodox icon – emphatically show how sacred slogan writing might have been thought of back then. Another sketch depicts German soldiers who have intruded an Athenian neighbourhood and killed its residents during a round-up [013]. An edifice of the scene depicted is covered with slogans that read: 'long live freedom' and 'Huns Out',[069] showing the omnipresence of parietal writing in the Greek capital.

Together with other artistic means of that period, these sketches play a dual role: humiliate the enemy and propagandise the heroism and patriotism of the Greeks. They also work as means of representing a 'reality' in an era that photography is neither prevalent and affordable nor safe a practice. This given, artistic images are seen here as recording devices, as evidence of how the practice of wall writing appears in a specific historical context. Historian Peter Burke warns us, however, that the treatment of artistic images as historical proof is not without dangers, since the artists "were not working with future researchers in mind and what interested them may not have been an exact representation".[070]

In artistic and historical iconography, wall writings often appear either unintentionally (e.g., in photographs) or as secondary elements (e.g., in paintings). Yet, there are some images that are concerned solely with the practice of wall writing and the slogans that appeared in specific instances during the Occupation. Ilias Fertis's painting is exemplar as it depicts the moment when wall writing is executed [014]. The action takes place during the night at the junction of Eresou and Zoodochou Pigis Streets in Exarchia district,[071] as the characteristic blue toponymic signs evince. In the back of the scene, a young boy serves as look out at the crossroad while three partisans – one woman and two men – write with red paint on the wall. In the foreground, two men – probably undercover look outs as well – are chatting. In front of the wall one kneels to allow the young man to climb on his back and write on a higher spot on the surface, while the woman operates as his paint supplier. Putting the slogan on a difficult to reach point evinces bravery, time consumption and makes it harder to remove.

The walls of the depicted scene are fully covered by signed slogans with patriotic or partisan content. The one on the right – at the point where the lookout boy stands – reads 'Long Live the 25th March' and is signed by ELAS. This is a rather symbolic date as it refers to the outset day of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottomans in 1821. Another writing on the right hand side of the wall reads 'Bulgarian fascists out of our Macedonia', signed by EAM. This refers to the planned concession of a particular territory in Northern Greece to Bulgaria. Beneath that slogan one can read 'Conscription Down - ELAS' which refers to the forcefully imposed by the Germans civil conscription that took place in 1943. On the left hand side of the wall a stylised

072 Hanging is a wide-spread practice during the Occupation, undertaken for purposes of intimidation and public humiliation either by the Germans against those who resist or by partisan groups against collaborationists of the Third Reich.

073 This phrase is the motto of Greece adopted after the Greek War of Independence and refers to the nine stripes of the national flag: one syllable of the motto per stripe.

A. Tassos' engraving (1943). 'EAM EPON', 'Death to traitors', 'Kill the Bulgarian Fascists'.

015



074 Haralambidis, M. (2011). *The Experience of Axis Occupation and Resistance in Athens: The National Liberation Front (EAM) Resistance Movement in Eastern Districts of Athens.* (PhD). Athens: National Kapodistrian University. [in Greek]. p. 301.

075 As resistance groups developed, organised and grown in numbers, the procedures of wall writing became standardised and specific colours were adopted by different groups (e.g., green for EPON members; red for EAM and ELAS supporters; blue for right-wing organisations). Each group – especially the leftist ones – paid considerable attention to the content as well as placement of the slogans. Foivos Tsekeris, who experienced the Occupation as organised member of the Greek National Resistance movement, informs us that the writing crews develop a particular sign language to help them avoid getting caught (e.g., look outs sing a specific song to warn wall writers for patrolling Germans, etc.). For more details see Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students.* Athens: Entos. [in Greek]. p. 71.

076 For more details on how the painter (1906-1987) experienced the Occupation, see Fertis, I. (2003). *Occupation Memories*. Athens: Iolkos. [in Greek].

Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Writing on Walls' sketch from the 'Shadow over Athens' series (1946). Ink on paper.

016



Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Heil and Goodbye' sketch from the 'Shadow over Athens' series (1946). Ink on paper.

017



077 Whoever got caught writing in public is either shot on the spot or taken into custody. During the Occupation, those who were violating the curfew – which was in operation after the sundown – were automatically considered suspects and put in jail. For example, Foivos Tsekeris informs us that, during his 3 month-long confinement in the detention centre at 4 Korai Street, several slogan writers are imprisoned there. More details at Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students*. Athens: Entos. [in Greek]. p. 86.

gallows is depicted along with the barely legible slogan 'Hang the Fascists'.[072] Finally, the extended writing hand of the young man not only shows the tension in the moment of the execution but also masterly directs the viewer of the painting to focus on the most central slogan: 'Freedom or Death', the motto of the Greek flag.[073]

The way the figures are arranged in the painting reveals the collaborative spirit, the commitment and organisation of the practitioners, as if they perform assigned roles. This is something that one can also witness in the work of the distinguished Greek engraver A. Tassos (1914-1985). In one of his famous engravings, members of the resistance movement are depicted the very moment of their public intervention **[015]**. Under the dim light of the moon, five insurgents are shown at the rear façade of a building: two of them serve as look outs and inform their peers about the patrolling Axis forces; the central figure is depicted writing on the wall and the rest help the writer in his intervention. Historian Menelaos Haralambidis affirms the prevalent role of wall writing as a resistance practice during the Occupation.[074] He asserts that, even though in the beginning wall writing was practiced with chalks and crayons by one or two individuals, at a later stage it became a much more sophisticated and collaborative public intervention, executed with brush paint and undertaken by larger groups consisting of look outs and specialised wall writers.[075] In a sense, Fertis' painting encapsulates the customs – and probably the stereotypes – of wall writing during the Axis Occupation.[076] He shows us the daily effort of the resistance organisations to control as much space of the visual landscape as possible, while demonstrating the circumstantial constraints that wall writers had to face.

All these artistic testimonies show not only how wall writing is practiced during that period but also how dangerous it is. Wall writers, under extremely harsh conditions, risk their lives to intervene in public spaces. In another sketch of his series, Dimitriadis depicts a young boy who has been shot by the occupation army for writing a slogan **[016]**. The slogan that the boy managed to complete reads 'Long Live Freedom'. The boy is shown bleeding and lying on the pavement. Even though he dies out, he still holds tightly the paint brush in his fist; the two executors turn their backs to the boy and fend off the scene. The rage of the Axis forces against slogan writers is further underscored in the penultimate sketch of Dimitriadis' series **[017]**. This drawing refers to the moment when the Nazis withdraw their army from Athens (October 1944). A slogan writer attempts to celebrate this euphoria by welcoming the Allies in the city. However, she did not manage to finish the writing. The sketch represents a paint bucket standing in front of a wall upon which an incomplete slogan reads 'Welcome to the Allies' Arm...' with the paint of the letter 'M' dripping. The slogan writer, a female figure, is depicted bleeding with her face down while still holding tightly the paint brush in her hand. An armed occupation soldier is moving away from the scene towards his motorbike while still holding the gun with which he executed the young girl, looking at her with rage and contempt. In a sense, this scene symbolically shows that the weapon on the one side is the gun while at the other is the paint brush.

These sketches could not illustrate more vividly the dangerousness of slogan writing.[077] Yet, writing on the walls together with poster pasting are two of the most popular weapons in the daily struggle of the Athenians against the Occupation army. Their role is manifold: they give courage, disseminated news that is censored, advise citizens on the current situation, stimulate resistance mood and, of course, propagandise. Yet, what is of interest here is how wall writing is represented, used and valued that period. It seems that, in stark contrast to the wide-spread perception that contemporary practitioners are mere vandals or sell-outs – as is the case with the OCC graffitists – wall writers of the WWII were considered to be heroes.

1.1.2. '7 Jahre Pech': The Athenian Linguistic and Visual Landscape during the Occupation

Journalist and amateur photographer Kostas Paraschou experienced the Occupation in Athens and, by risking his life, captured with his camera how everyday life was in the Greek capital at that time. He informs us that slogans are written every single night and wall owners or even random passerby are forced to clean them the next morning, thus underlining once again how effective, let alone infuriating for the Occupiers, is this practice. Slogans are written next to, or even on top of, each other, resulting to a "futuristic colourfulness".[078] Some house owners, Paraschou argues, intentionally damage their surfaces in order to deter more writing and, in turn, more wiping out. This partial 'self-demolishment' of exterior surfaces gave Athens a devastating look, as if it was bombarded even though it was not [018].

Slogan writing is taken very seriously by the Occupiers because it is posing a threat to, or at least it challenges, the governance of the visual sphere. This battle for domination and ownership of the urban visual landscape during the Occupation should not be overlooked.[079] One should imagine an urban setting where human corpses lay down on the pavements and swastika flags dominate the horizon [019]. For the flags especially, famous Greek painter Yannis Tsarouchis once poetically said how difficult it was for the Athenian population to get used to their presence: "I remember that the Hitlerian flags, vivid red as they were, did not match with the softness of the landscape. The sun rebuked and punished them, forcing them to fade and giving them a terracotta colour, as the colour that the red wine gets when mixed with water. The sun transformed them to more modest colours".[080]

The windows of the buildings, when they are not closed, are protected by sacks in case Athens is bombarded [020]. Axis aircrafts occasionally fly over Athens but this is no surprise to the Athenians. On the ground – apart from the means of public transport – exclusively occupation vehicles patrol the streets as gas is not available for the Athenians. Except for the Nazi's cars which bear the respective emblems, public buses and trams also have the letter 'V' (initial of 'Vinceremo') on their sides [021] while, at the same time, the called 'death trolleys' collect the dead bodies from the streets to lead them to the morgue located at the heart of the city [022]. Occupied Athens is a graveyard in public view: insurgents are hanged with a rope on trees and are left in public display for days to intimidate the passerby.

Except for the images of cruelty, there is an imposition in the field of urban signs as well. Warning notes inform the onlookers about the prohibitions that are in operation: 'Keep right on the queue. Violators shall be punished' warned those who had to wait in mass meal queues, or a notice 'Warning! Typhus fever. No entry' advised the passerby to stay away from particular buildings and/or areas [023]. 'Be careful with your deserts as they might be stolen from your hands' was a sign outside of a kiosk, in era that famine and starvation are responsible for more deaths than those caused by the war itself [024]. Except for the coffin-making businesses, shops are closing down day after day. Together with them, the Greek symbols and signs gradually vanish. This is the first, and probably the only, moment in the history of contemporary Greece that the language in urban environments is challenged. This gives rise to a completely new 'linguistic landscape', as linguist Rodrigue Landry and social psychologist Richard Bourhis terms it. That is the "visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or

Paraschou's photo album is divided into a few categories, each of which illustrates a characteristic phenomenon, moment or place of Occupied Athens (e.g., Acropolis, death trolleys, mass kitchens, etc.). Among these categories is wall writing thus demonstrating how widespread the phenomenon was during the Occupation. Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation [I Katochi]* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. [in Greek]. p. 147.

078



Deliberately damaged walls to deter graffiti. 55 Marasli & Kleomenous St junction. ca 12.1944.

018
K14



The Nazi flag raised on the Acropolis, 27.04.1941

079

On 30 May 1941, just 33 days after the occupation of Athens, the duo of 18-year-old boys Apostolos Santas and Manolis Glezos takes the swastika flag down from the Acropolis flagpole in the first symbolic act of resistance against the Nazis.

019
P05



The Benaki Museum at Koumpari St protected by sacks. ca 1941.

Quoted in Hatzipateras, K. & Fafaliou-Dragona, M. (1999). Witnesses and Testimonies. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres,* 25 April. p. 25. [in Greek]

080

020
M12

The Occupation Army forced all the buses to bear the letter V (initial of the Italian word 'Vinceremo'). ca 1941.



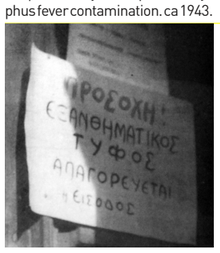
021
J08

Left: A 'death trolley' collecting dead bodies from the streets of Athens. Right: All 'death trolleys' have one destination, the morgue at Massalias St in Athens city centre. ca 1942.



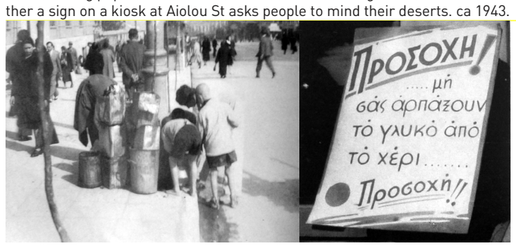
022
J10

Sign in Ippokratous Street warns the passers-by about potential typhus fever contamination. ca 1943.



023
I10

Left: Starving population searches the trash for food. Right: A few metres farther a sign on a kiosk at Aiolou St asks people to mind their deserts. ca 1943.



024
J06

region".[081] Language studies scholar Alastair Pennycook, who examines the relationship between contemporary graffiti and linguistic landscapes, argues that "our linguistic landscapes are the products of human activity not merely in terms of the signs we put up but also in terms of the meanings, morals and myths we invest in them".[082] In a sense, the concept of linguistic landscape is concerned with the political role as well as the social function of language in the physical world. This given, the fact that the publicly written Greek language – a sign of the identity of the locality – starts disappearing or being replaced, is not something to ignore. During the Occupation, most toponymic signs are written in either German or Italian, demonstrating emphatically who is in charge **[025]**. This also implies that the Occupying forces are here to stay while alluding that the major audience of the city to be addressed is no longer the Greeks. All kinds of advertisement signs (e.g., commercial, theatrical plays billboards, etc.) are written in three languages (German, Italian, Greek) **[026]**. In these cases, often German language appears on the top and the Greek follows at the bottom **[027]**. In other words, the Greeks are treated as a 'linguistic minority' of some sort, thus showing the power relations embedded in the field of signs and language.

In such a visual and linguistic landscape dominated and controlled by the Occupiers, wall writings which are primarily written in Greek language render visible a constant – albeit asymmetrical – urban warfare. In the 'top-down' strategies of the Nazis, the Athenians counterpose their own 'bottom-up' practices in an attempt to claim back the visual space they've lost.

081 Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. (1997). Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 16*(1), 23-49. p. 23.

082 Pennycook, A. (2009). Linguistic Landscapes and the Transgressive Semiotics of Graffiti. In E. Shohamy & D. Gorter (Eds.), *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery* (pp. 302-312). London: Routledge. p. 308.



025 M11
Toponymic signs in Athens turn into Italian. Here the signs at the junction of Academy and Vasilissis Sofias Sts. ca 1942.

026 K08
The signs of Apollon Cinema in Stadiou St written in three languages. ca 1942.



027 L08
The film '7 Jahre Pech' [7 Years of Jinx] is screened in Pallas Cinema. The signs written in three languages. Greek appears last. ca 1943.



1.1.3. 'Wellcom': Historic Graffiti Iconography in Occupied and Post-Occupied Athens

Prominent historian of Greek photography Alkis Xanthakis argues that the Allies, before abandoning Athens in April 1941, destroy the facilities of the major film making company Kodak so as not to be occupied by the Nazis.[083] This has as a direct consequence the profound shortage of photographic films and technical equipment. Xanthakis also asserts that photography was prohibited in occupied Greece; whoever got caught just having a camera, let alone filming without securing prior permission by the Germans, could even face a death penalty. According to historian of Greek photography Manolis Kasimatis, this made many professional photographers go out of business forcing them to change careers, or caused their internment and even death.[084]

In this context, documentation becomes the subject of only a few[085] risky amateur photographers and filmmakers who secretly manage not only to capture but also to rescue some images of occupied Athens.[086] Despite the limited photographic documents of that period, some evince the prevalence of wall writing in occupied Athens. During the Occupation, some writings are hortatory while others are commemorative. In either case, they do not seem to be accidentally positioned, but rather site-specific. For example, a slogan at Zaimi Street in Exarcheia district, reads: 'Passerby, here, during the demonstration of 22/12/42, the student M. Konstantinidis was assassinated - Hate - Revenge - the Fascists' [028]. The keyword of the slogan is 'here'. In a sense, this place-sensitive commemorative wall writing works as an ephemeral memorial of the Greek Resistance. It refers to the second largest rally that took place in Occupied Athens when approximately 40.000 protesters that headed towards the Deputy Ministry of Labour faced strong opposition at the back of the Archaeological Museum by the Occupation forces which opened fire killing law student M. Konstantinidis.

Another slogan, written three consecutive times on the walls of an edifice at Tositsa Street in Exarcheia district, reads: 'People of Athens, oppose massively to the conscription - EAM' [029].These writings targeted the non-organised residents of Athens and called them to react against the planned German civil conscription.[087] On 05.03.1943 approximately 200.000 Athenians demonstrated against this plan and, during severe conflicts, 15 protests lost their lives and about a hundred suffered injuries. As of 2000, on the spot stands a modest reminder of what happened there, as all the wall writings disappeared along with the buildings that supported them [030].

A similar commemorative sign referring to the struggles of the Occupied Athenians is placed on the wall of the Bank of Greece at Panepistimiou Avenue [031]. Here, on 22.07.1943, one of the largest protests in Occupied Europe took place when Athenians marched to voice their opposition over the Germans' plans to give a part of Northern Greece to their Bulgarian allies. In front of the Bank of Greece building, demonstrators confront the armed Occupation forces resulting to the death of 15 people and the injury of 60.The only sign that reminds to the onlooker what happened that day[088] is the free-hand written, barely legible inscribed text of the plaque. In a sense, these marks, whether a graffito or a commemorative sign, are able to reflect the topicality of the moment of their production.

A wealth of historical iconography of that period can be found in photographs taken upon the liberation of Athens from the Nazis.[089] On 18.10.1944, British and other Allies come

Xanthakis, A. (2008/1981). *History of Greek Photography, 1839-1960* (J. Solman & G. Cox, Trans.). Athens: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive. p. 381.

083

Kasimatis argues that in 1943 the Germans injured famous photojournalist Petros Poulidis during his attempt to document the situation in Athens and killed his son Giorgos for the very same reason (2015a). As we will see in the following sections, Petros Poulidis was caught during in 1944 and imprisoned at the detention centre at 4 Korai Street probably because he was photographing. More details in Kasimatis, M. (2015a). For the Photography during the Occupation. *Documents of History*, 13 October. Available at: http://documentahistory.blogspot.co.uk/2015/10/blog-post.html. Accessed: 20 December 2015. [in Greek].

084

085

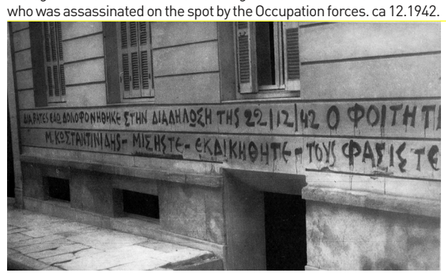
Photographer Kostis Liontis informs us that this had two negative consequences: firstly, due to the ban of photography, documentation of Greece was practiced only by very few risk takers and, secondly, these very few had to remain anonymous so as not to get caught. Of course, due to both the shortage of technical means and the unstable situation during and immediately after the occupation, many archives and collections were damaged. For more details see Liontis, K. (2011). *The Unknown Photographers of the Greek Resistance.* In *Photography during Resistance Conference*. Athens: Benaki Museum. [in Greek].

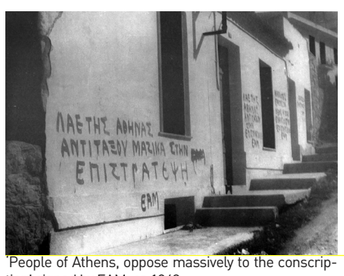
086

Kostas Paraschou vividly describes the difficulties he had to face in order not only to take the photographs but also preserve them, e.g. shortage of films and chemicals, storing photographs in the roof, scepticism of neighbours, etc. Also, it is important to note here that Papanastasiou's footages of Occupied Athens have been used as evidence against the cruelty of the Nazis in the Nuremberg trials in 1947. In the Trial of the Greek Case (no 47) – which started on 8.7.1947 and lasted until 19.2.1948 – Papanastasiou's footages were screened and condemned several Nazi officials. For more details see Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. [in Greek]. pp. 9-11; and Papanastasiou, A. (1944). *From the Tragedy of the Enslaved Greece, 1941-1944.* Athens: Independent Production. [in Greek].

A slogan at Zaimi St commemorating law student M. Konstantinidis who was assassinated on the spot by the Occupation forces. ca 12.1942.

028
D09





'People of Athens, oppose massively to the conscription' signed by EAM. ca 1943.

029
G11

The column reads: '5 March 1943. Here in a clash between unarmed Athenians and the armed Occupation forces the planned civil conscription and the transportation of Greeks at the military factories in Germany was cancelled - this is a unique event in the whole Europe'.



030
E09

In a scene of the celebrated Greek film *Travelling Players* appear slogans which replicate discursively and graphically actual and historically existent graffiti that Paraschou photographed in Athens during the Occupation. Compare the following: Angelopoulos, T. (Dir.). (1975). *The Travelling Players*. Athens: Papalios Productions, around 81'; and Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. [in Greek]. pp. 148, 153.

087

Left: EPON members are shot by the Nazis while graffiting the Bank of Greece building. Right: Sign reads 'On 22.7.1943 here, during the mass protest of the Athenians against the visions of the Bulgarian fascists, lost their lives the EPON members Panagiota Stathopoulou, 17-years old, Thomas Hatzithomas, 20-years old, Koula Lili, 19-years old, who confronted unarmed the Hitlerian tanks'.

031
L09



088

The footage 'The Crowd is being shot at Panepistimiou Avenue' captures the moment when protesters encounter the German tanks in front of the Bank of Greece. See Papanastasiou, A. (1944). *From the Tragedy of the Enslaved Greece, 1941-1944.* Athens: Independent Production. [in Greek].

089

Constantinos A. Doxiadis (1914-1975), one of the most famous and prolific post-war Greek architects and urban planners, in his report *The Sacrifices of Greece in the Second World War* (1946), has extensively documented and mapped the severe damages that the WWII has caused on the urban fabric of several cities around the country and on national infrastructure, as well as the massive losses of population and several other dramatic changes in the demography, financial situation and productive structures in Greece. Further, interesting iconographic and historical material related to the liberated Athens has been presented in the exhibition *12 October 1944: Free Athens* which was held at the Municipal Gallery of Athens from 6.10.2015 to 31.10.2015 and was curated by Giannis Gklavinas, Tasos Sakellaropoulos and Menelaos Haralambidis. Available at: http://freeathens44.org/. Accessed: 18 October 2015.

to Athens to help the Greeks establish a new national union government. Along with the British landing in Greece, Dmitri Kessel – an American-Ukrainian photographer who worked for the Life Magazine – comes to Athens. In his book *Greece 1944*[090] includes several photographs that arrest the visual aftermath of the war and records the prelude of the Greek Civil War, namely the 1944 'December events'.[091]

Several photographs from various locations in Athens city centre that were taken before and after the December events – especially those by Dmitri Kessel – evince the omnipresence of wall writing in the Greek capital.[092] The presence of the hammer and sickle – the symbol of the communist party – is overwhelming in post-war Athens [032]. The initials 'KKE' and 'EAM' still decorate several strategic buildings, such as the Archaeological Museum, the Athens Academy and the Zappeion Exhibition Hall [033]. In general, the Athenian landscape is considerably different compared to that of the wartime. Greek, British, and other Allies' flags dominate the horizon, while walls are saturated with slogans written by the partisans [034]. On 18.10.1944 Athenians cheerfully welcome the Allies in the main streets. They celebrated this event with the raising of the Greek flag on Acropolis. On an ephemeral, gate-like structure outside the newly established headquarters of EAM at 4 Korai Street, the banner reads: 'Long Live England, Soviet Union, United States' [035]. Or, a poster at Syntagma Square reads 'Long Live our Great Allies: England, America, Russia' [036]. What once was a landscape of war is now transformed into a landscape of victory. Graffiti's content is also different: now it does not call to arms the residents of the city but praise liberty and welcome the allies [037]. For the next month and a half, writings that 'wellcom' (misspelled 'Welcome') the Allies appear on banners, buses, and pavements while several others decorate the walls or even the national flags [038]. Yet, this warm welcome and wide-spread euphoria would not last long.

Upon the end of the war, the national union government in agreement with the British Lieutenant-General Sir Ronald MacKenzie Scobie ask the disarmament of EDES and ELAS by 10.12.1944. ELAS members refuse to hand over their arms and, instead, choose to protest against this felt injustice.[093] On Sunday 03.12.1944, a large mass of unarmed citizens marched towards Syntagma Square. Greek government gendarmes and British forces open fire, killing 23 protesters and injuring approximately another 140. This incident triggered yet another round of urban warfare, social turmoil and severe political instability. Two days later, Lt Gen Scobie imposes martial law in Athens and the scenery of Occupation is once again at place. This time, however, instead of the Nazis troops, British tanks and soldiers are patrolling Athens [039].

During the December events, the visual landscape changes again and another round of warfare in the domain of signs is at place. Athens is now deserted, in stark contrast to the full of people city a few hours after the liberation. The streets are empty of citizens and full of soldiers. The Acropolis becomes once again a privileged place of symbolic and literal contestation: EAM members install and light their initials on the sacred rock to show to whom it belongs [040], while the British army uses it as an advantageous fortress to shoot towards the city. Allies' aircrafts bomb targets on the ground causing severe damages to the urban fabric [041] and wreckages are lying in the middle of the streets as buildings are demolished by the left-wing partisans to construct tank roadblocks and barricades [042]. In a few days, Athens city centre is divided in two: one controlled by the Greek Government and the Allies (the strip from Omonoia to Syntagma Square, including Kolonaki district up to Ippokratous Street), and another by EAM-ELAS.

Kessel, D. (1994). *Greece 1944*. Athens: Ammos. [in Greek].

090

Kasimatis has identified several contrived images by Kessel, and challenges the objectivity and evidential status of photography whilst showing the peculiar, sometimes propagandistic, role that photographers might have played during that period. More details in Kasimatis, M. (2015b). December 1944: When D. Kessel Constructed Photo-realities. *Facebook Post*, 7 December. [in Greek].

091

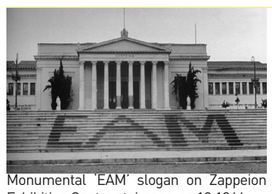
The 'Dekemvriana' refers to a series of urban clashes in Athens between the Greek left-wing Resistance forces (EAM-ELAS) and the British Army supported by the newly established Greek coalition government. This was due to the unanticipated influence that the Greek Communist Party (KKE) enjoyed after the War which jeopardised the plan of the British to restore the Greek King to power. The 'December events' last 33 days (03.12.1944 - 05.01.1945) and officially end with the Treaty of Varkiza signed on 12.02.1945 between the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is backed by the British, and the General Secretary of the KKE. The Dekemvriana cultivated a climate of distrust between the left and right in Greece, which was never restored thereafter, heralding the three year-long Greek Civil War (30.03.1946 - 16.10.1949) that started the year after. For more details on the December events see Haralambidis, M. (2014). *December Events 1944: The Battle of Athens*. Athens: Alexandreia. [in Greek]; Diamantouros, P. (2014). *The December Events*. Athens: Archeio. [in Greek]. For a detailed study on the role of photography during the December events see Kasimatis, M. (2008). *Photographing the December of 1944*. Athens: Fotografizontas. [in Greek].

092



Slogan on the Panathenaic Stadium: '26th Anniversary of KKE. We Will Ensure Laocracy'. ca 11.1944.

032
R12



Monumental 'EAM' slogan on Zappeion Exhibition Centre staircase. ca 12.1944.

033
Q10

The Archaeological Museum covered with slogans praising Greek resistance army and the 'Ellies' (Allies). ca 11.1944.



034
D08

'Long Live England, Soviet Union, America'. ca 10.1944.



035
K08

036
N09

Left: In liberated Athens, the Allies are welcomed with graffiti. 'Welcome Liberators - Long Live the Gre[at]...'. Right: Slogans on the pavement in front of the Hotel Grande Bretagne, the Allies HQ, at Syntagma Square: 'Welcome EAM', 'Welcome Great Allies and ELAS Partisans, EAM'. ca 10.1944.



037
M10

Athenians welcome the Allies and celebrate the Liberation at Stadiou St on 12.10.1944.





The extra note on top reads 'Hitler and Organisation X ragefully tried to break the Alliance of England America Russia, and because this is unbreakable, they... broke it on paper!!'. ca 10.1944.

038
L08

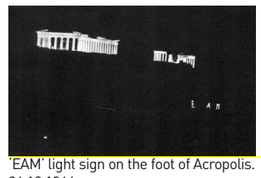
This decision would put both resistance organisations into a vulnerable position because the general disarmament ultimatum had excluded the right-wing forces.

093

A British tank patrols at Kriezotou Street in Athens. Slogan at the back reads 'KKE', 'People will free Greece soon'. 6.12.1944.



039
M10



'EAM' light sign on the foot of Acropolis. 06.12.1944.

040
P06

The National Theatre of Greece during the December Events. Slogan reads 'KKE First Raised the Flag of the Liberation'. ca 12.1944.



041
H04

Rebels taking cover in Kidathineon & Nikis Street junction. The slogan reads 'Nafplio - Kerkyra - Haidari: Titles of Honour for KKE and the Greek People - KKE'. ca 12.1944.



042
P09

Athens city centre is divided in two. Barbed wire delimitate the areas under Governmental control. Omonoia Square on 06.12.1944.



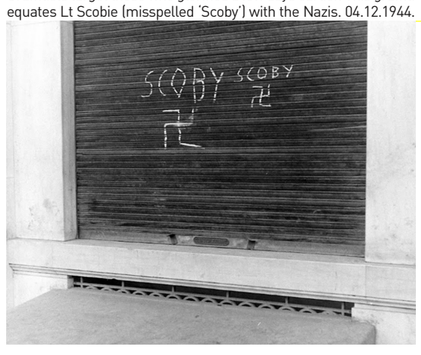
043
I06

The Hotel Grande Bretagne was entrapped with explosives since the Occupation. During the December events, EAM members planned to blow the building in which the Britons resided. This sabotage never happened, however, because the explosion could kill PM Winston Churchill – who was visiting Athens during the December events – and this would escalate the situation.

094

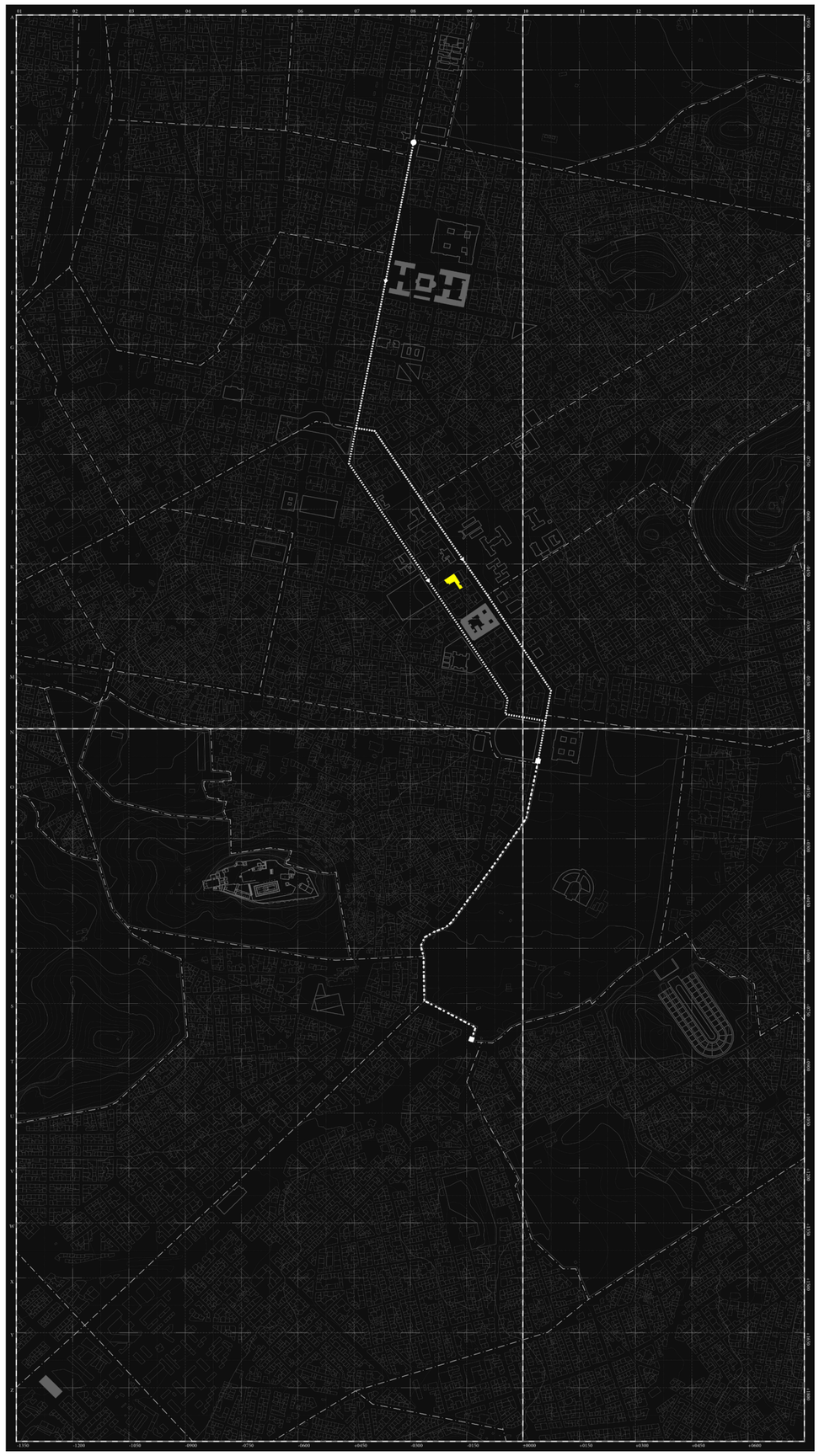
Graffitists target those who glorified a few days earlier. This graffiti equates Lt Scobie (misspelled 'Scoby') with the Nazis. 04.12.1944.

044
M10



Barbed wire delimitate the spaces which are under Governmental control **[043]**. The graffiti on the walls now offend the Allies that glorified a few days earlier. A single day after the 'Bloody Sunday', a slogan reading 'Scoby' (misspelled Lt Scobie) accompanied by the Swastika sign appears on the closed shutters of the British forces headquarters, the Hotel Grande Bretagne[094] in Syntagma Square, where Lt Scobie resided **[044]**.

The aforementioned examples not only emphatically illustrate the close relationship that writings share with the places on which they appear but also the power of these signs to disclose the time of their production while, at the same time, indexing particular events. Due to their ephemeral nature, graffiti reflect the situation that engender them and, in so doing, capture both the successive and the more dramatic shifts in history as they manifest on surfaces. When examined in relation to each other, these surfaces are able to provide access to the otherwise inaccessible (hi)stories of the city.



1.2. Nazi Detention Centre: Hieroglyphic Images

There is no other place that can better encapsulate the history of the Occupation and December events than the building at 4 Korai Street (henceforth K4) in Athens city centre. In the basements of this building, the walls bore witness in moments of torture, resistance and death. The surviving inscriptions are the faded marks on one of the darkest pages written in Greek modern history.

If by freezing time photography has the advantage of arresting the ephemeral and attesting past events, graffiti does so too. Both graffiti and photography 'frame temporality' – as Chmielewska puts it –[095] and act as witnesses of history. Historian Peter Burke, in his work which problematises the use of images as evidences of history, argues that photographic as well as other artistic images provide access to earlier times and the years that separate the researcher from the image-maker "are evaporated for a moment, and the past can almost be felt and touched as well as seen".[096] In the absence, or rather limited usage, of the photographic medium and other documentation means during the Occupation, let alone in a space of confinement, the K4 inscriptions are able to provide unmediated access to that specific period. They literally allow us to 'touch' and have a direct contact with the life of this past.

Anthropologist Troy Lovata and art historian Elizabeth Olton – in their recent edited collection *Understanding Graffiti* which examines its function, form and politics – consider graffiti to be witnesses to history, operating like 'time capsules' offering us "an intimate and subjective view of society from a specific time".[097] The keyword here is 'subjective', as there is no such thing as objective translation of events. The writings on K4's walls are interpretations of past events and transcriptions of feelings into words and images. Yet, what is important, as Lovata and Olton suggest, is that these interpretations are offered to us from people "from inside a culture".[098] In other words, these writings are 'first hand' testimonies inscribed on the walls and can tell us what happened within these very walls and the city outside them during a particular period. They talk *from* that period, *for* that period. Yet, these are not "voluntary testimonies", as Paul Ricouer terms them, i.e. intended for posterity, but rather "involuntary testimonies", namely "witnesses in spite of themselves" that never meant to inform the researcher of the future.[099]

The fact that the marks on K4's surfaces are found in a relatively secluded context, does not mean that they are less important compared to their publicly visible counterparts. Nor are they hidden, private or isolated. The surfaces of the K4 and the writings they host are parts of an extended network of Athenian surfaces which together create a complex matrix of meaning. This building along with its inscriptions, due its unique turbulent past and preserved history, can be used as an exemplar case to examine how historical inscriptions are documented, represented and understood.

1.2.1. The NIC and the K4 Building: Mapping Travels in Space and Time

The Nazis enter Athens on 27.04.1941. A few days later they commandeer several governmental and institutional buildings in the city centre.[100] Among them was the National Insurance Company (henceforth NIC) building at K4 which, on 06.05.1941, becomes a Nazi Commander and

095 Chmielewska, E. (2009). Framing Temporality: Montréal Graffiti in Photography. In A. Gérin & J. S. McLean (Eds.), *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 271-292). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

097 Lovata, T., & Olton, E. (2015). Understanding Graffiti as a Witness to History. In T. Lovata & E. Olton (Eds.), *Understanding Graffiti: Multidisciplinary Studies from Prehistory to the Present* (pp. 139-141). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. p. 140.

100 The footage clip entitled 'The most Beautiful buildings of the City are commandered by the Italian-Germans' by Aggelos Papanastasiou shows K4 building, upon which the Nazi flag has been raised. This flag has been conserved and is now exhibited in Room II of K4. See Papanastasiou, A. (1944). *From the Tragedy of the Enslaved Greece, 1941-1944.* Athens: Independent Production.

099 Burke, P. (2001). *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence.* London: Reaktion. p. 87.

098 Lovata, T., & Olton, E. (2015). Understanding Graffiti as a Witness to History. In T. Lovata & E. Olton (Eds.), *Understanding Graffiti: Multidisciplinary Studies from Prehistory to the Present* (pp. 139-141). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. p. 141.

096 Ricoeur, P. (2004). Memory, History, Forgetting (K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. pp. 170-171.

Left: The K4 once completed in 1938. Right: The K4 during the occupation. The sign installed on the building reads in German 'Ortskommandantur' which means 'District Commander'. ca 4.1941.



045
K08

101

K4 has not been systematically explored. This further contributes to the public's unawareness of the space and its history. K4's well-designed website is perhaps the only place where important information is organised and accessible.

K4 entrance today.



046
K08

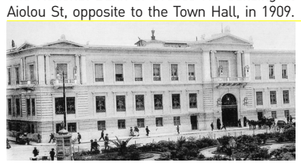
Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. [in Greek].

102

103

Skiadas, E. (1997). *National Insurance Company, from 19th to 21st Century. Athens: National Insurance Company*. [in Greek], p. 13.

The National Bank of Greece HQ building at Aiolou St, opposite to the Town Hall, in 1909.



047
J06



The Rossel's House at 4 Korai St. ca 1895.

048
K08

The NIC invites three famous Greek architects of the interwar period to design the building: E. Kriezis, A. Metaxas and M. Lykoudis. The design is commissioned to Lykoudis who unexpectedly dies shortly after. Kriezis and Metaxas are asked to continue the design but the latter also dies a few months later and eventually Kriezis is commissioned the project. Kriezis the NIC's board decided that "the rhythm of the facade has to be Greek". For more details see Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. [in Greek]. p. 66.

104

The National Bank branch at 6 Sophocleous St, before the addition of the extra storey. ca 1942.



049
J06

105

See Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2006a). *Classical Revival: The Architecture of Ernst Ziller, 1837-1923* (M. Eleftheriou, Trans.). Athens: Melissa. p. 211.

106

Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. [in Greek]. p. 67.

107

Ioannis Metaxas – a general and dictator, who served as the PM of Greece from 1936 until 1941 – has predicted that the country, in one way or another, would be involved in the WWII. In 1937, he ordered the mandatory construction of air-raid shelters in public and private buildings. By 1941, more than 12.000 shelters were built across Attica. Among them are many celebrated buildings, such as the Bank of Greece HQ, the Hotel Grande Bretagne, the Army Share Fund building and the National Insurance Company HQ. For an in depth documentation of the shelters in Attica, see Kyrimis, K. (2016). *The Shelters of Attica: A Tour in the Secret, Subterranean Attica*. Athens: Self-Published. [in Greek].



050
K08

Left: K4 bearing the EAM sign. Right: Banner designed by Kostas Gramatopoulos on EAM HQ's facade. ca 10.1944.

108

The footage film 'Street Fighting in Athens' captures the moment when the Sherman tanks along with British troops intrude the K4 on 6.12.1944. Available at: http://www.britishpathe.com/video/street-fighting-in-athens. Accessed: 23 March 2015.

051
K08

Sherman tanks and troops of the 5th (Scots) Parachute Battalion intrude to the EAM headquarters at 4 Korai Street, disarm ELAS members and take them into custody. 6.12.1944.



Detention Centre [045]. Today, in the busy and crowded Korai Square the entrance to the once partisans' prisons is very easy to be passed unnoticed. In fact, most Athenians are unaware of its existence and this has also to do with the fact that it is underexplored.[101] It is solely a double glass door that leads to a staircase which connects the basements with the outside world. Above the entrance door stands a modest epigraph which reads 'Space of Historical Memory 1941-1944' [046].

The title of the most recently published book that discusses the history of the NIC – *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings* edited by Giannis I. Emiris – could not illustrate more vividly the turbulent past of the Company and its relationship with Greek modern history and Athenian urban context.[102] In June 1891, upon its foundation as a subsidiary of the National Bank of Greece,[103] the NIC is temporarily settled in the imposing neoclassical headquarters building of the National Bank of Greece at Aiolou Street [047]. Months later, the NIC moves a few meters farther to the pre-existing Axelou's House at the intersection of Stadiou and Santaroza Streets - an edifice that no longer exists.

In August 1894, the Company buys Ludwig Rossels' House at 8 Korai Street (today number 4), where it settles its headquarters [048]. Approximately forty years later, in 1934, the NIC decides to demolish Rossels' House and replace it with a new imposing building that would meet both its increasing spatial needs as well as the aesthetic and marketing visions of the Company. The same year – after a series of unfortunate events related to the involved architects –[104] the NIC commissions the design of the building to architect Emmanouil Kriezis, a genuine exponent of neo-academicism and eclecticism. As long as the construction works lasted (1936–1938), the NIC moves temporarily to a branch of the National Bank at 6 Sophocleous Street [049], designed by famous neoclassical architect Ernst Ziller.[105] On December 1938 the Company moves back to K4 to be settled in its newly completed headquarters building. In the proceedings of the management board one can read how proud the officials of the Company are: "The appearance of the Building is a living advertisement of the Company".[106]

The building is constructed with the highest quality materials of its time. It is ultramodern as it had elevators and central heating. The edifice also has air-raid shelters, an essential design component at the time, in an attempt to protect civilians and avoid experiencing again the destructive results of the WWI air bombardments.[107] Apart from the shelters, the rest basement area hosts Asty cinema. Yet, history had different plans for this building. On 6th May 1941, just a week after the Occupation of Athens, the 'pride' of the Company is partially commandeered by the Axis Forces and in early October the Company is forced to fully abandon the building. It is then that the air-raid shelter is turned into a detention centre.

In October 1944, the Occupation comes to close and the Germans evacuate Athens. Then, the K4 building is reclaimed back by the NIC, its legal owner, but on 31.10.1944, it is commandeered once again. This time by the EAM resistance organisation which settles its headquarters in the building [050]. Following the December events – during which the British troops defeat EAM by driving a tank[108] into the doorway of the K4 building and forcing most its members to surrender and disarm [051] – the K4 is occupied by the British for several months. In 1946, as the Greek Civil War is about to begin, the building is commandeered once again, this time by the Greek State to host the Public Power Corporation (DEI). As the K4 building kept consecutively being commandeered, the NIC moves to 6 Sophocleous Street building where it spends approx-

When the Company realises that it is impossible to settle back to its headquarters building at Korai St, starts looking for alternatives. In 1955 the management board of the Company chooses to build new headquarters adjacent to Syntagma Square and in 1963 the NIC moves to its new building at 8 Karagiorgi Servias St, designed by architects Iason Rizos and Fotis Kairis. Approximately four decades later, the Company decides to construct a new head office building that would be able to cover its increasing needs and which would signal the new contemporary era of the Company. Celebrated Swiss architect Mario Botta is commissioned the project for the new building at Syngrou Ave.

The NIC in 8 Karagiorgi Servias Street in 1963.



052
M08

109

The NIC HQ in Syngrou Ave in 2006.



053
W02

In December 1996, while the city of Athens is preparing to apply for the Olympics and undertakes several important infrastructural works, the Greek Association of Architects (SADAS) asked the Greek State to consider the relationship of the K4 spaces with the under construction Panepistimio metro station in order to transform the basements into an integral part of the city and its everyday life. Unfortunately, this proposal was never taken into consideration and largely contributed to, or rather perpetuated, the unawareness of the Athenians on the existence of such an important historical space.

110

We owe the recovery of K4's inscriptions to famous Greek actress Aliki Nor who, in her search for a particular place to stage a demanding theatrical play, visits the basements in December 1981 and identifies the still covered under paint carvings on the walls.

111

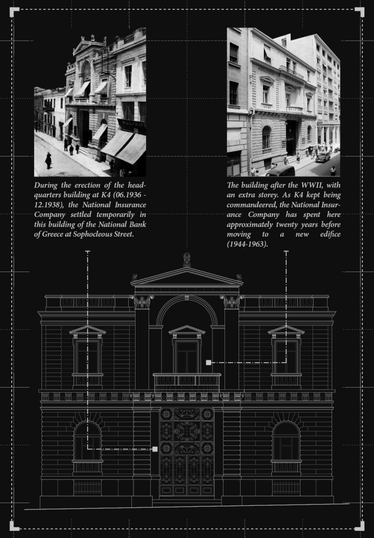
K4's official opens on 16.05.1991 but from 1995 until 2008 the spaces remained closed for further restoration works, allowing only group visits. As of 2008, K4 occasionally hosts theatrical plays, performances and other cultural and artistic events.

112

imately twenty years before resettling in a building at Karagiorgi Servias Street in 1963 **[052]**, which will abandon in 2006[109] to be settled for good in its imposing new headquarters at Syngrou Avenue next to the Onassis Cultural Centre **[053]**.

Throughout their turbulent past, the basement spaces are transformed from ultramodern emergency shelters to hostile detentions centres, and later to threatening storage spaces.[110] Upon an initiative of the NIC, the basement of K4 becomes a listed historical monument.[111] From early 1991, conservationists work with precision to uncover these long forgotten reminders of some painful human stories. Visitors have to wait until 2008, however, when the once Nazi detention centre finally delivered to the public as an accessible space of historical memory.[112]

1.2.2-01. K4 Urban Context (1:2000)

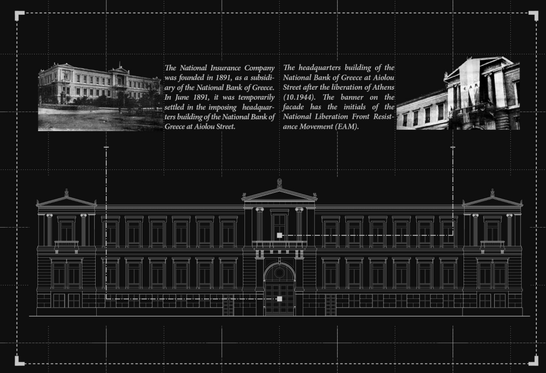


D08 National Archaeological Museum

E07 Athens Polytechnic

D16 Averof Prison

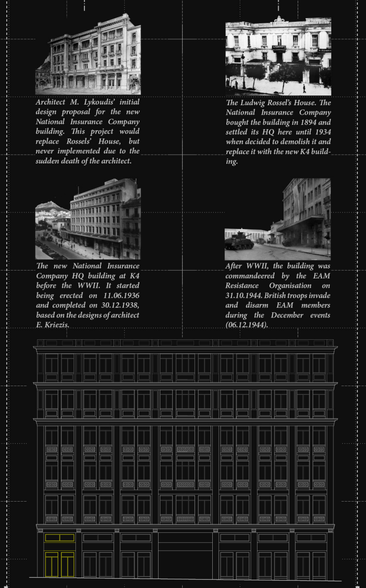
Former National Insurance Company HQ (K4 Aiolou St) – Elevation



"The appearance of the Building – and the settlement of our headquarters there – is a living advertisement of the National Insurance Company" (Emiris, 2006:67)

"The management board of the National Insurance Company is convinced and shares the view of the architect that the rhythm of the facade has to be Greek." (Emiris, 2006:66)

"This is the pride of the Company ... The appearance of the building is a living advertisement of the National Insurance Company." (Emiris, 2006:67)



OM

[Departure Centre – Dimokritou St] 1.45km

Former National Insurance Company (Lykoudeio) SQ – Elevation

I07 I07 I07 I07 I07

J06

KO Athens City Hall

PB

J09

K08 K08 K08

Athens Trilogy

Space of Historical Memory

K1

K09

L08 KO Old Parliament

Bank of Greece

[Departure Centre – Ag. Paraskevi] 1.50km

Nazi High Command Headquarters

Allies Headquarters

M11 Gestapo Detention Centre

M10

M08 M08

SY

M11 Greek Parliament

W02

[Departure Centre – Mpenakeio Sygrotima] 1.65km

MO

National Insurance Company HQ – Nazi Detention Centre (1 Kaisariani St) – Elevation

Athens Morgue

Nazi Detention Centre
National Insurance Building
Key Sites [AP, BoG]
Key Buildings
Key Buildings [Demolished]
Key Buildings [Commandered]
AA Square Initials
A60 Locational Index

Zoom In
Protest Gathering Point
Demonstration Route
Detention Route
Index Line
Displacement [Pro-Liberation]
Displacement [Post-Liberation]

1.2.3. Korai: The (Hi)stories of a Street

Korai Street is located between Stadiou and Panepistimiou Avenue in one of the most central places of Athens. It has small length but quite large width. During the Occupation, Korai Street is still accessible by vehicles, as it is pedestrianised in mid 1980s. Today, it is primarily used as a square and is characterised by the prismatic glass of the Panepistimio metro station. The street takes its name in 1884 by the famous and widely respected Greek humanist intellectual of the 18th century Adamantios Korais.[113]

On the upper part of Panepistimiou Avenue, Korai Square is adjacent to the Athens University building, which is part of the famous 'Athenian Trilogy'.[114] On the lower side of Stadiou Street, Korai meets Klathmonos Square where the Ministry of Interior and Finance used to be settled.[115] Before and after the Occupation, many financial institutions had their headquarters at Korai, such as Piraeus, Commerce and Angloamerican Bank **[054]**. Some of these are later demolished and/or replaced. Nonetheless, Korai Street continues to have a cosmopolitan and wealth character, since several celebrated buildings still stand around it. Among them, at the lower side corners of the Square, are the former Grand Hotel d' Athenes and the Alpha Bank multi-storey building. At the upper level, still remain the General Accounting Office and opposite to it stands the modest 'Yellow Building', i.e. the restored house of former Greek PM Dimitris Rallis. The majestic appearance of the street made it a constant reference point for visitors and travellers alike. Postal cards from the late 1890s affirm the visual appeal of Korai Street **[055]**.

The importance and strategic role of Korai Street is diagnosed quite early from urban planners. Its proximity with the Athenian Trilogy and the direct visual connection with Athens University building, together with the imposing image of the buildings which are concentrated around the street, seem ideal. In 1918, English urban planner Thomas Mawson[116] is meant to be the first who proposed the extension of Korai Street **[056]**. In 1941, once the Ministry of Finance at Klathmonos Square that used to block the way is demolished, Ioannis Antoniadis takes advantage of this unique opportunity and proposes an Haussmann-like extension of Korai Street[117] to meet Monastiraki Square and create a monumental vista from the Athenian Trilogy, and especially the University of Athens central Building, to the Acropolis **[057]**. Yet, this overambitious project is never implemented not only due to its prohibitive cost but also because Greece is heading towards the WWII.

K4's strategic location in the heart of Athens city centre is perfect for the Nazis for several reasons. It ensures easy transportation of the prisoners and their perfect isolation in the basements. Its close proximity with several commandeered emblematic buildings – such as the former Army Share Fund Building which, during the Occupation, has been transformed into the German High Command headquarters – makes the location ideal.

Adamantios Korais (1748-1833) – the person behind the toponym – is amongst the founding figures of the Modern Greek Enlightenment that leads to the Greek War of Independence in 1821 against the Ottoman rule. He also largely influenced Modern Greek culture, as he laid the foundations for the emergence of the post-independence Greek language, known as *Katharevousa*.

113

The Athens Trilogy, also known as Neoclassical Trilogy, consists of the Athens University (1864), the National Library of Greece (1902), and the Academy of Athens (1885). The former is designed by the Danish architect Hans Christian Hansen (1803-1883), while the others are by his brother Theophil Hansen (1813-1891). All three are built under the supervision of the Saxon architect Ernst Ziller (1837-1923), who was famous for his significant contribution in the Athenian neoclassical architecture movement. Panepistimiou Avenue, literally translated 'University Avenue', owes its name to the Athens University building. Trilogy's buildings are the best known landmarks in Athens city centre.

114

Since 1989, the official name of Klathmonos is 'Square of National Reconciliation', but it is rarely used. 'Klathmonos' derives from the Greek 'klathmos', which means 'crying and mourning', and owes its name to the fired employees of the public sector, who used to gather and cry for their lost jobs in the square in front of the Ministries of Interior and Finance.

115

Left: Pireaus Bank at 1 Korai St, ca 1962. Middle: Bank of Commerce at 5 Korai St, ca 1920. Right: Grand Hotel D' Athenes at 2 Korai St, ca 1910.



054
K08



055
K08

Cart postal from the cosmopolitan Korai St. ca 1900.

Philippides, D. (1984). *Neohellenic Architecture: Architectural Theory and Practice (1830-1980) as a Reflection of the Ideological Choices of Neohellenic Culture.* Athens: Mellisa. [in Greek]. p. 118.

116

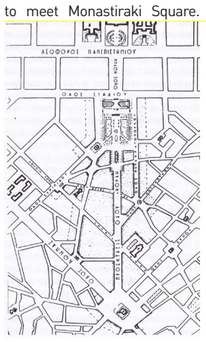


056

Thomas Mawson's proposal for Athens city centre (1918), characterised by the extension of Korai St.

117

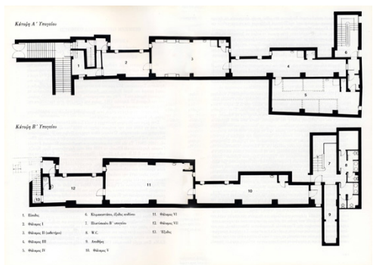
Ioannis Antoniadis' monumental proposal for Athens city centre (1941) extends Korai Street to meet Monastiraki Square.



Philippides, D. (1984). *Neohellenic Architectural Theory and Practice (1830-1980) as a Reflection of the Ideological Choices of Neohellenic Culture.* Athens: Mellisa. [in Greek]. p. 204.

057

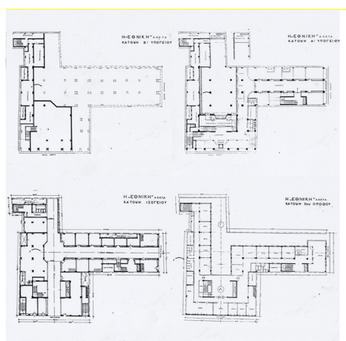
1.2.4. A Network of Confinement: Seven Rooms, Multiple Locations



The plans of the spaces of the former Nazi Detention Centre produced by the restoration team in 1990.

058

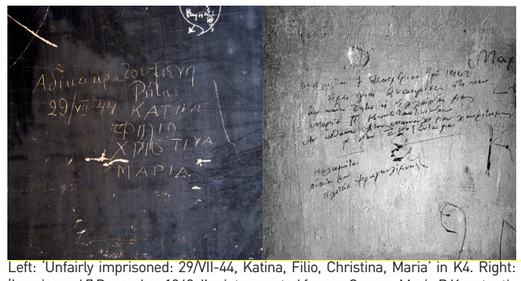
059



The plans of NIC building in 4 Korai St. From left to right: 2nd basement; 1st basement; ground floor; 2nd (typical) floor. During the occupation the interrogations happens in the offices of the 2nd floor which is directly connected with a stairwell to the detention centre.

120

In Room II several found prisoners' belongings are in display (e.g., razors, packets of cigarettes, pieces of letters, cups, etc.). In the same room, the Nazi flag that was raised on the top of building is also exhibited, opposite to the door from 6 Merlin St detention centre.



Left: 'Unfairly imprisoned: 29/VII-44, Katina, Filio, Christina, Maria' in K4. Right: 'Imprisoned 7 December 1943. I'm interrogated for our Greece. Maria P Konstantinidou. If I die give greetings to my mom' in 6 Merlin St Gestapo interrogation centre.

060
K08
M11

The two basements develop six meters below the ground level. Nikos Minos – the project leader of K4's restoration – notes that the basements are equipped with double glazing windows and heavy bespoke design metal doors – ordered directly from Berlin – with rubber finishing to prevent the inflow of gases inside the shelters while ensuring airtight locking.[118] Even though they unfold in two different levels, the two basements are connected with inner staircases, [058] something that is extremely convenient for the new planned use of the spaces by the Occupiers. Also, the existence of a stairwell core located at the corner of the basements facilitated the connection between these spaces with the rest of the building and is often used to move inmates to the interrogation offices upstairs [059]. The basements also have all the basic amenities and proper arrangement to become detention centres from day one: they are compartmentalised and have isolation cells; they are equipped with toilets and two small showers for the basic needs of the prisoners; and they have three metal water tanks. In other words, they meet the basic 'comfort standards' for such a facility. What an irony of history.

The basements consist of seven main rooms and auxiliary spaces, arranged in two different levels: four rooms on top and three on the lower level.[119] The wall inscriptions inform contemporary researchers about the conditions of internment and the arrangement of the spatial uses. The walls are living storyboards embodied within the structure of the building; they are like personal diaries in which the imprisoned write their daily experiences.

Today, Room I at the upper level is the main entrance and lobby of the visitors while Room II is currently used as a small exhibition space.[120] The absence of inscriptions and the existence of basic amenities in rooms I and II reinforces the assumption that these two rooms must have been used as office spaces. As Minos reports, Room III was found covered with white limewash, the removal of which brought to light the 1944 ashen grey colour layer as well as parts of the 1943 ochre that used to cover the entire surface of the wall. In Room IV, only few wall inscriptions were found but traces on the floor and the walls suggest the existence of five non-surviving isolation cells. At the end of the room, the door on the left leads to the core stairwell and from there to the second basement at the lower level. All rooms of this second level were used as spaces of detention but only the 1944 wall coating still survives. The number and remarkable plurality of inscriptions in rooms V, VI and VII is overwhelming. Several signed marks on the walls of chamber VII evince that it was primarily used for female prisoners. In this very room, inmate Maria became friends with Rita, Katina and Christina. Was Maria the same person who was held at 6 Merlin Street detention centre (Maria Konstantinidou) and inscribed her presence in both instances? [060]

Minos informs us the graffiti-clad walls of the detention centre must have been cleared off at least two times given that three consecutive layers were identified:[121] the original ocher colour that was applied on the walls during the construction; the second ocher layer dates back to 1943; the third layer of 1944 was of ash colour and it is this latter layer that was revealed during the conservation, after the removal of the white colour paint that covered all the walls.[122] This means that what has been recovered cannot be more than the one third of what was originally there. Yet, some inscriptions from earlier stages can still be identified primarily due to their large depth that couldn't be wiped out with colour, revealing the palimpsestic nature of these surfaces.

118 Minos, N. (1991). *Space of Historical Memory, 1941-1944*. Athens: National Insurance Company. [in Greek]. pp. 10-11.

119 Minos, N. (1991). *Space of Historical Memory, 1941-1944*. Athens: National Insurance Company. [in Greek]. pp. 11-12.

121 Minos, N. (1991). *Space of Historical Memory, 1941-1944*. Athens: National Insurance Company. [in Greek]. p. 12.

122 This constant removal of writings shows how irritating this intimate practice of resistance was for the occupiers. As Foivos Tsekeris narrates, when he was detained in K4 a German guard furiously warned him that he would face severe consequences if he planned to write on the walls. See Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students*. Athens: Entos. [in Greek]. pp. 63-64.

The Averof prison is a part of the detention network during the Occupation. ca 1941.



Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students.* Athens: Entos. p. 79.

The Averof Prison at Alexandras Ave was a heavy, gray stone edifice that was built in 1896 and intended to be juvenile reform school. During WWI, it became a prison for political and military detainees and, during the Axis Occupation, it was transformed into a harsh detention centre for Greek resistance fighters. The building was demolished in 1972 and in its place the Palace of Justice was erected.

Top: The Block 15. Bottom: A sketch of the gate by F. Dimitriadis (1946). Ink on paper.



Chaidari concentration camp was the largest in the country. Located at the Athens suburb of Chaidari, it was built in 1936 as military camp. It was commandeered in September 1943 until the withdrawal of the Nazis from Athens. The complex consisted of several building 'blocks', including the infamous 'Block 15'. Mutatis mutandis, the Chaidari concentration camp is the Greek equivalent of Auschwitz. For more, see Municipality of Chaidari (n.d.) *Occupation – National Resistance – The Chaidari Camp*. Available at: http://www.haidari.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=641&language=en-US. Accessed: 10 October 2015.

123
061
D16
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062
A00
125
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M11
126



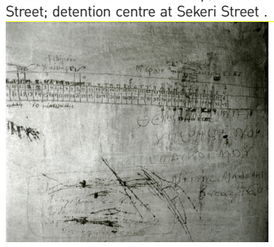
Left: The Gestapo HQ in 6 Merlin St, ca 1941. Right: The door of the interrogation centre, ca 1990.

The Gestapo had its HQ at 6 Merlin St is located at Kolonaki district, less than half kilometre away from the K4. Whoever got caught by the SS was transferred at this building for interrogation and merciless torturing. The edifice no longer exists; today, in its place stands a multi-storey office complex. Until recently, at the entrance of the new building there was a sculptural creation by Thanasis Apartis that had the original metal door of the detention centre. The door is now exhibited in K4's Room II .

127

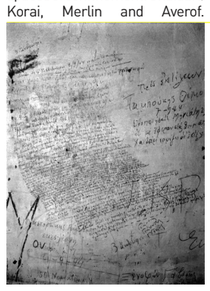
Papaioannou, V. (2006). T*he Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konsatntinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum.

Writings on top of the 'calendar' read the sites where the inmate was held: Chaidari concentration camp; Merlin Street; detention centre at Sekeri Street .



064
M11

The writings mention all the spaces of confinement: Chaidari, Korai, Merlin and Averof.



065
M11

066
K08
M11



Left: 'Mavromatakis - Executed in the Basement' in Room III of K4. Right: 'Choupis Ioannis. 19 years old. 12 Vlafianou St. I'm executed 8-9-44. Long live the fatherland' in 6 Merlin St Gestapo interrogation centre.

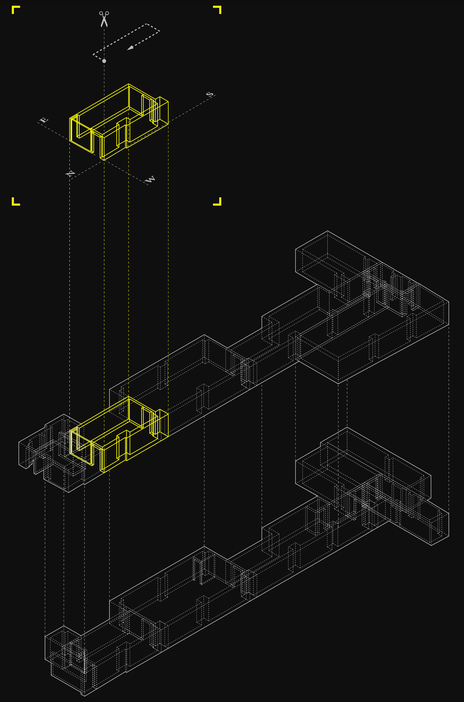
The addition of these extra layers not only provided more empty space for new writings but also ensured the survival of the previous ones. The burial of the graffiti both destroyed them and helped their preservation.

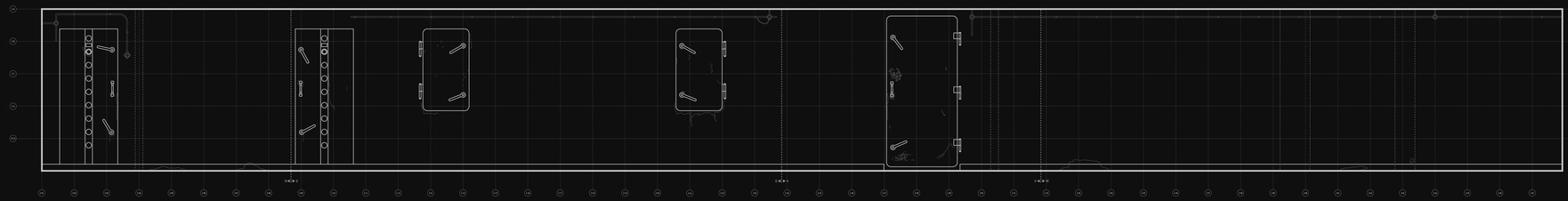
The dates of the remaining inscriptions suggest that the imprisoned are held for a relatively short period of time before being transported to German military courts, concentration camps, or directly to execution centres. Foivos Tsekeris – an organised member of the National Resistance and inmate at the K4 for three whole months – informs us that in K4 the prisoners are held for as long as the interrogations last.[123] After that, the potential outcomes are the following: firstly, be jailed in Averof Prison **[061]**;[124] secondly, end up at Chaidari's concentration camp **[062]**;[125] thirdly, be transferred to the notorious 6 Merlin Street interrogation centre **[063]**;[126] or, final and less probable, be released. The surviving (representations of) inscriptions in some of these spaces suggest a complex network of confinement as writings of different locations point to one other.

Immediately after the liberation of Athens, famous Greek photographer Voula Papaioannou visits Merlin's centre and takes some images of the walls that are covered with inmates' inscriptions.[127] One inmate, in particular, lists in great detail the transfers between different detention and martyrdom centres. We learn that s/he was held in Chaidari concentration camp and brought back in Merlin Street centre after ten days **[064]**. Korai and Chaidari are mentioned in another inscription, highlighting once again that confinement sites (and consequently writing) takes place in different settings weaving complex nexuses of meaning **[065]**.

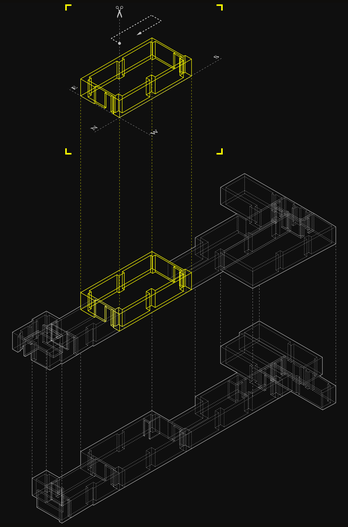
The centres operating in Merlin and Korai Street are not only spaces of confinement but also of martyrdom and executions **[066]**. The fact that K4 is the only place that survived from that period in Athens – as Averof Prison and Merlin detention centre were demolished – coupled with the surprisingly large number of well-preserved writings, make these handwritten testimonies historically unique.

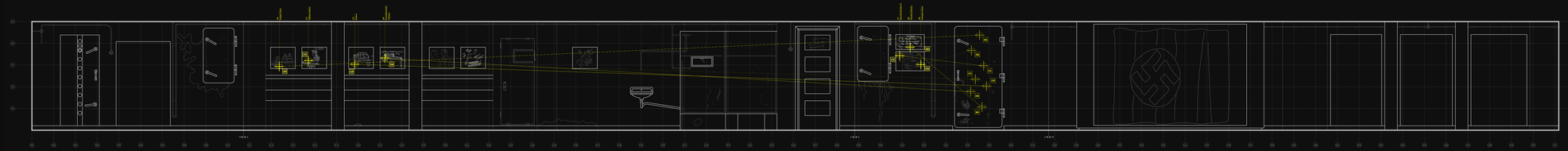
1.2.5-01_K4 Physical Tanks Room | Panorama [1:20]



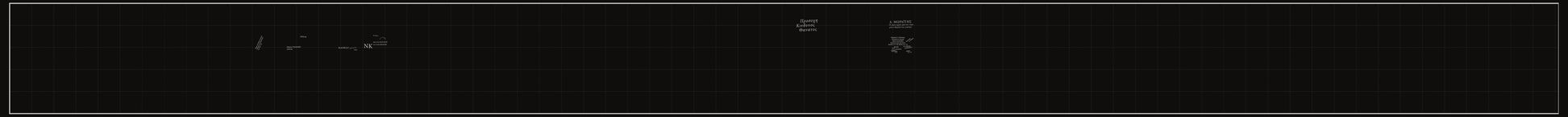


1.2.5-02: A4 Physical Texts. Room II Panorama [1:20]

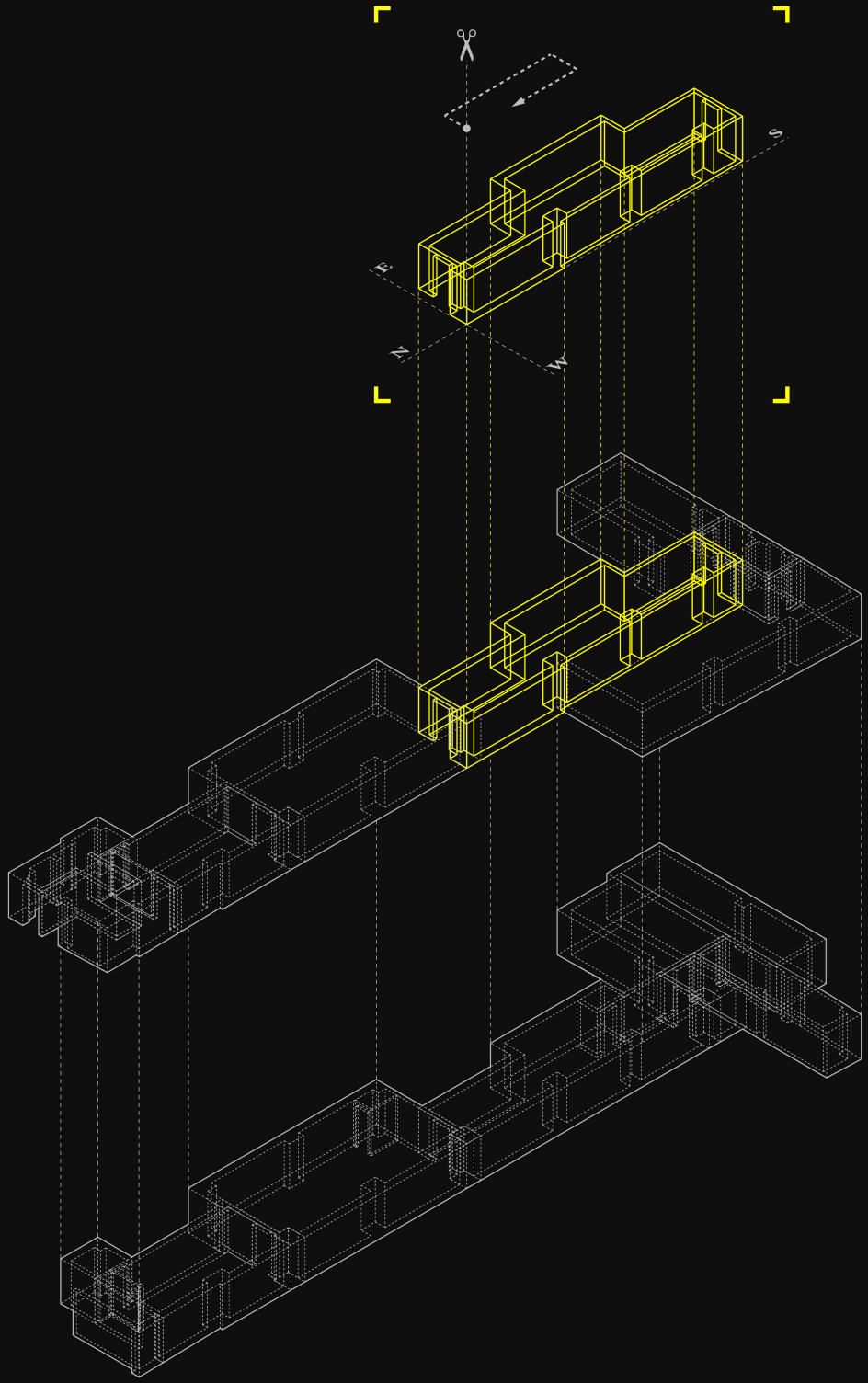


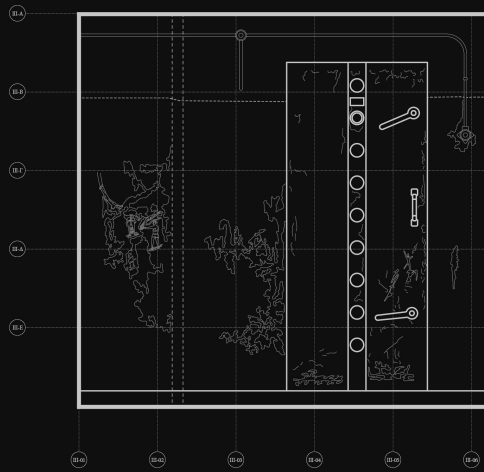






1.2.5-03. K4 Physical Texts: Room III Panorama (1:20)

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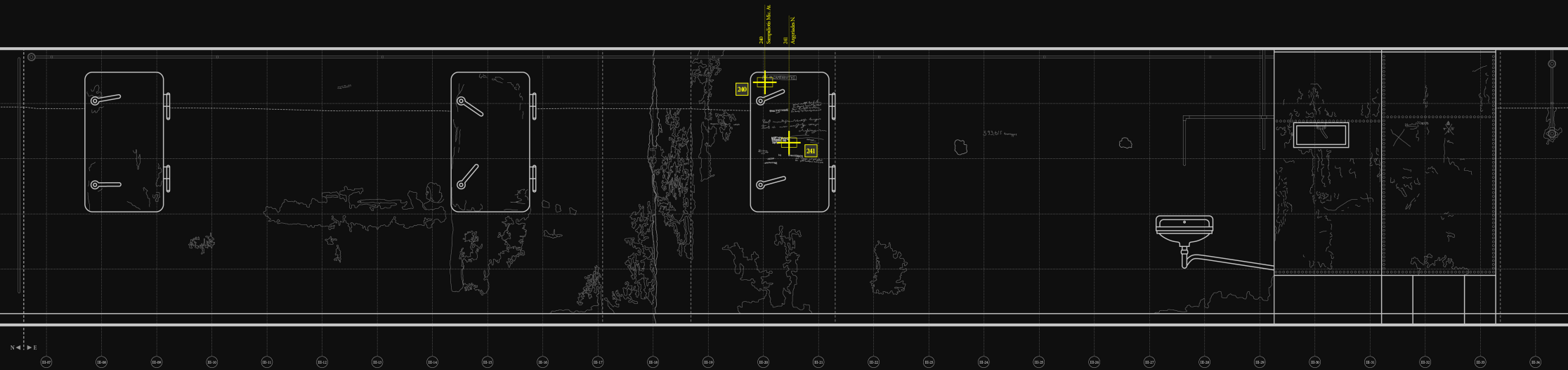
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Sampaliotis Mic. At.
241
Argyriades N.
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593.615 Απόστολος
N ◀ ▶ E
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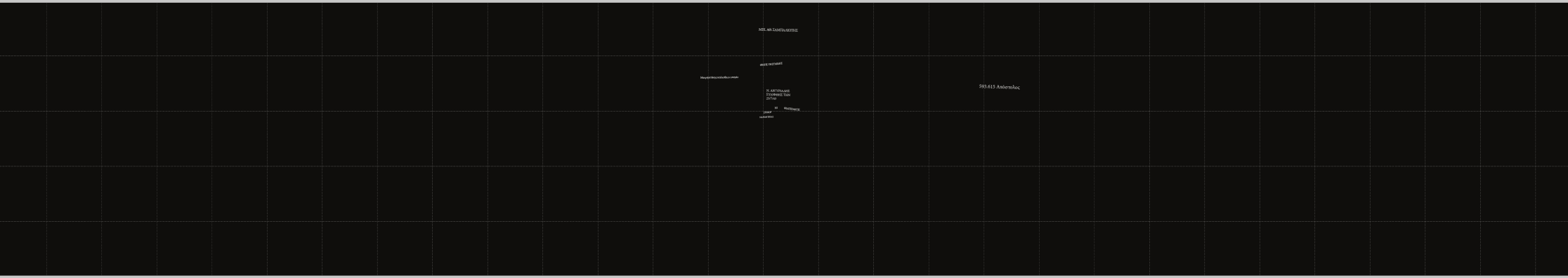
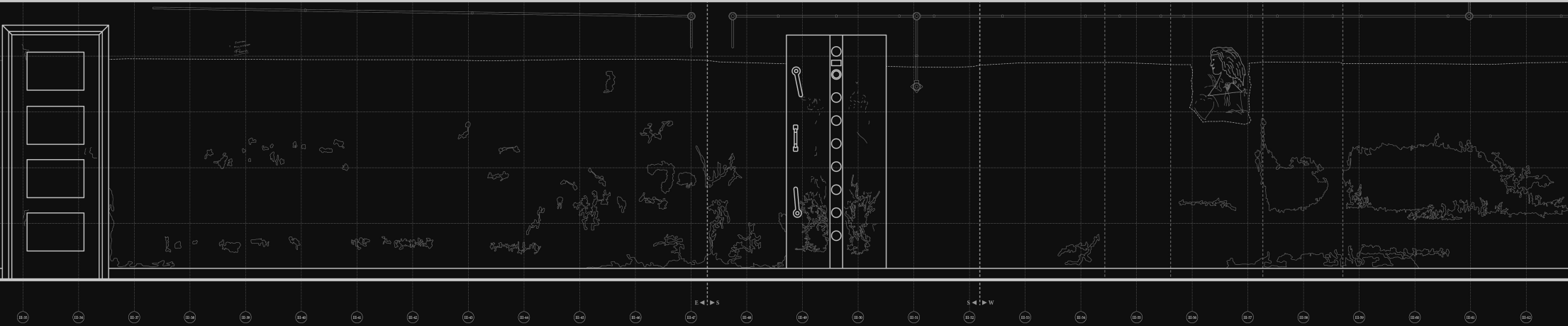

ΜΙΧ. ΑΘ. ΣΑΜΠΑΛΙΩΤΗΣ
Ν. ΑΡΓΥΡΙΑΔΗΣ
ΣΥΛΛΗΦΘΗΣ ΤΗΝ
23/7/43
593.615 Απόστολος


E ◀ ▶ S
S ◀ ▶ W
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Ga Schipper 29 7 44
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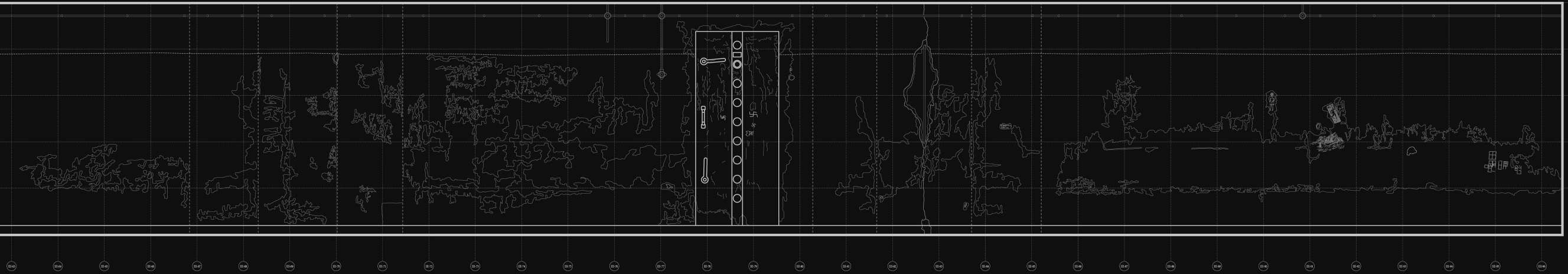
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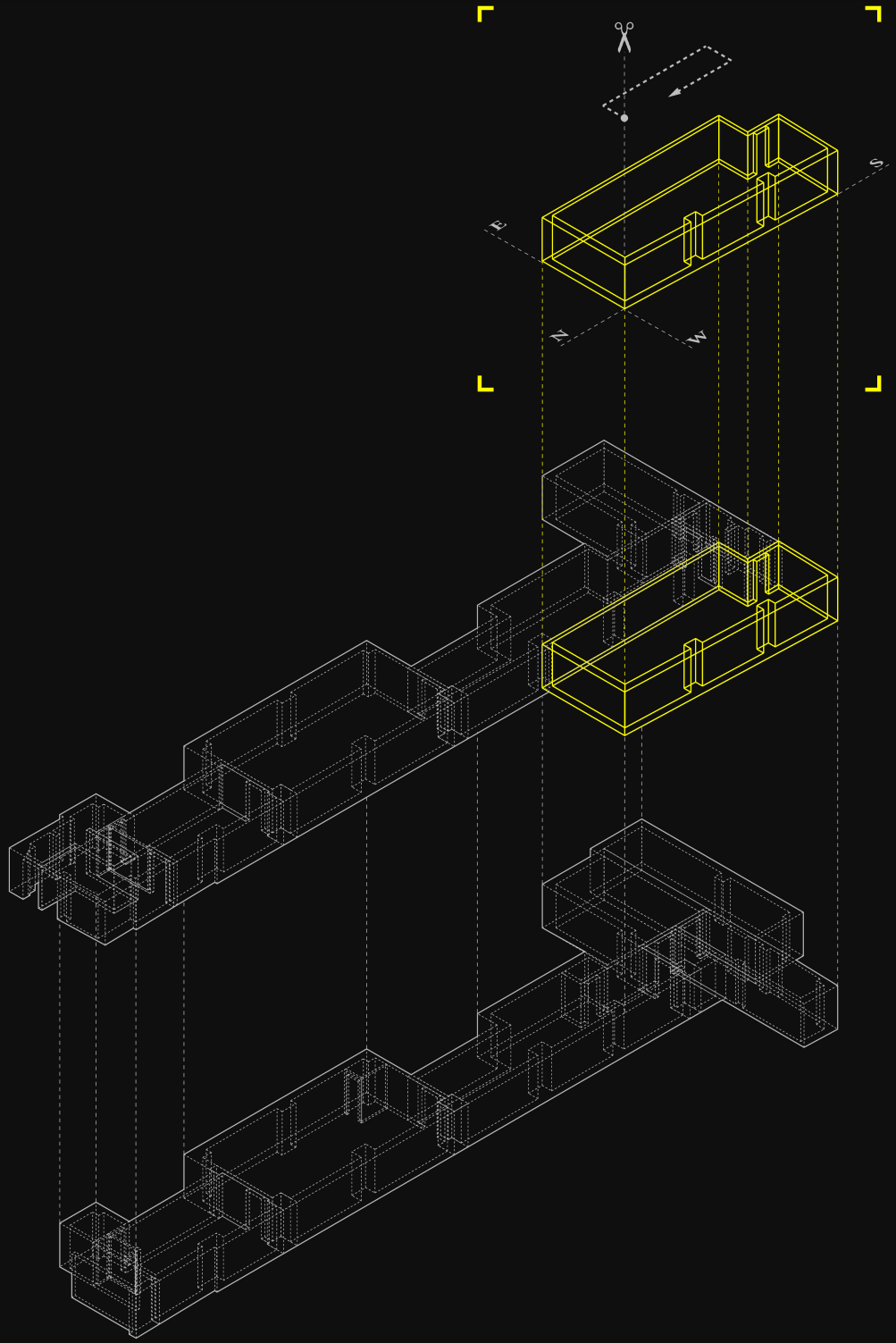
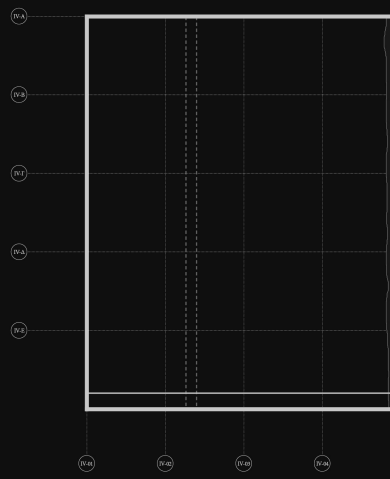
1.2.5-04. K4 Physical Texts: Room IV Panorama (1:20)

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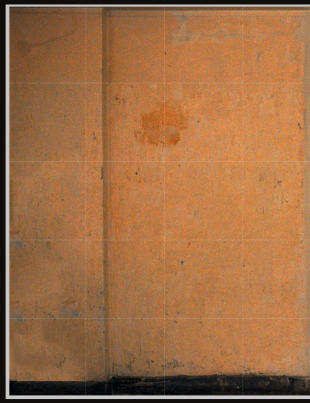
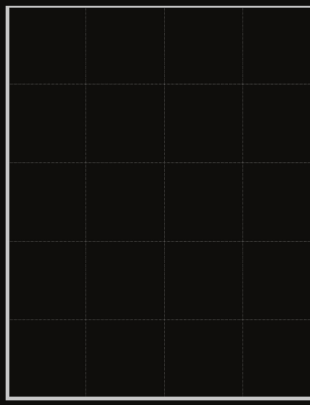
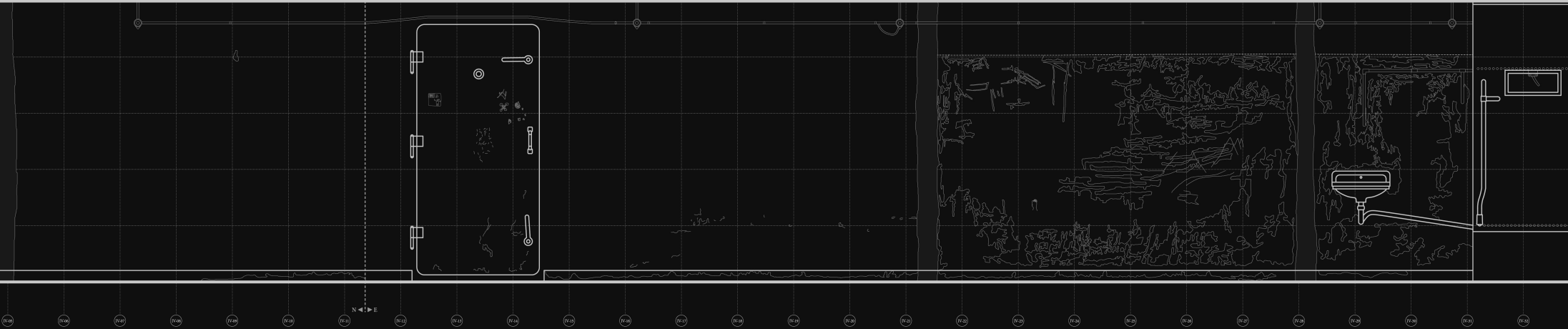
IV-Γ
IV-Δ
IV-E
IV-01
IV-02
IV-03
IV-04



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143 Barbieri Lorenzo
242 Graptakis
239 Psounis Eleftherios
143 Barbieri Lorenzo
239 Psounis Eleftherios
243 Skordilis Nikolaos
002 Athanasopoulos Nikos
244 Cimmino Armando
143
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IV-43
IV-44
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IV-45
IV-46
IV-47
IV-48
IV-49
IV-50
S ◀ ▶ W
IV-51
IV-52
IV-53
IV-54
IV-55
IV-56
IV-57
IV-58




Γραπτακης
Εμανουηλ
Εμανουηλ
Γραπτακης
Στομικοις
Πεδιάδος
Ηρακλίου
Κρίτης
17-7-1944
Capelommirello
Caromio
ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΣΚΟΡΔΙΛΗΣ
CIMMINO . ARMANDO
O MARIO
ISOHIA
Horea Depenies
ΑΘΑΝΑΣΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ
ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ
Αλ. Μενής
Malacum
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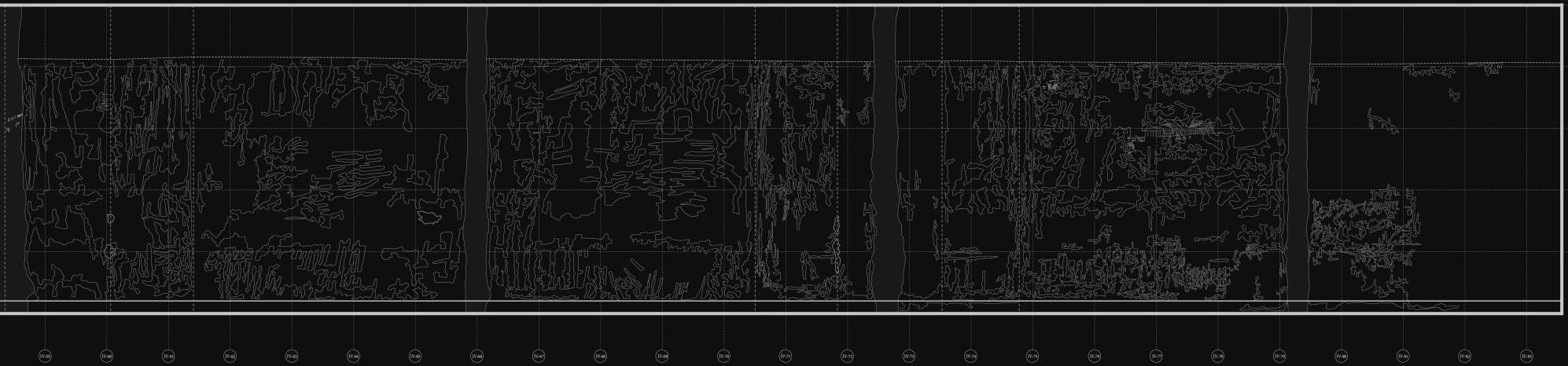
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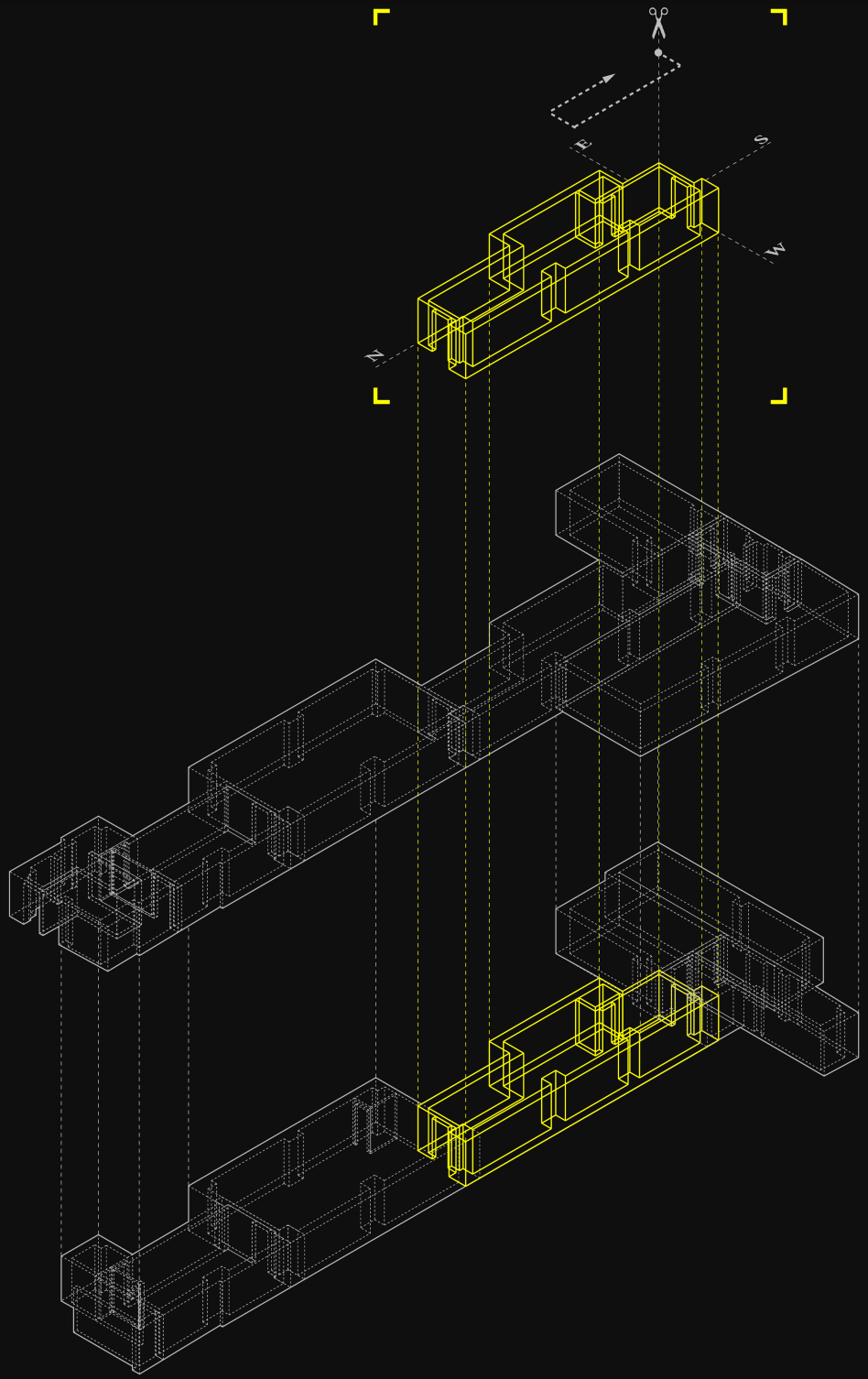
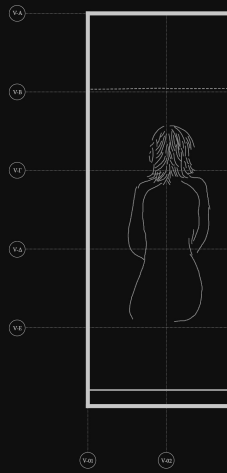
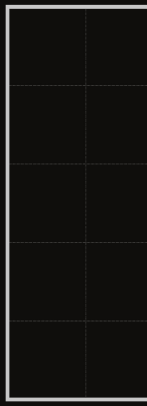
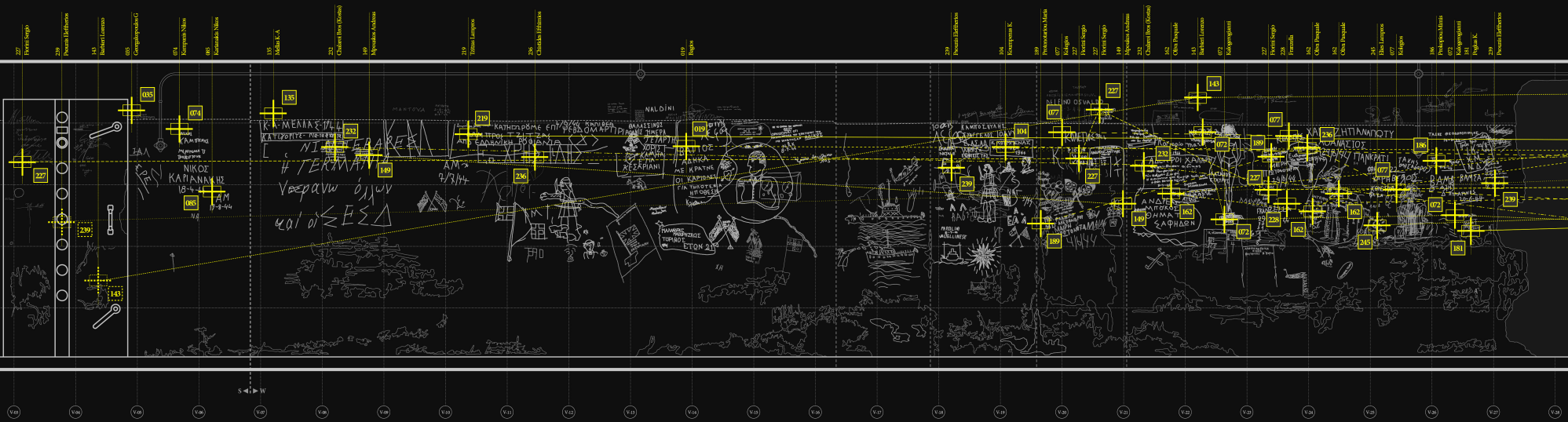
A B

1.2.5-05. K4 Physical Texts: Room V Panorama (1:20)




V-A
V-B
V-Γ
V-Δ
V-E
V-01
V-02

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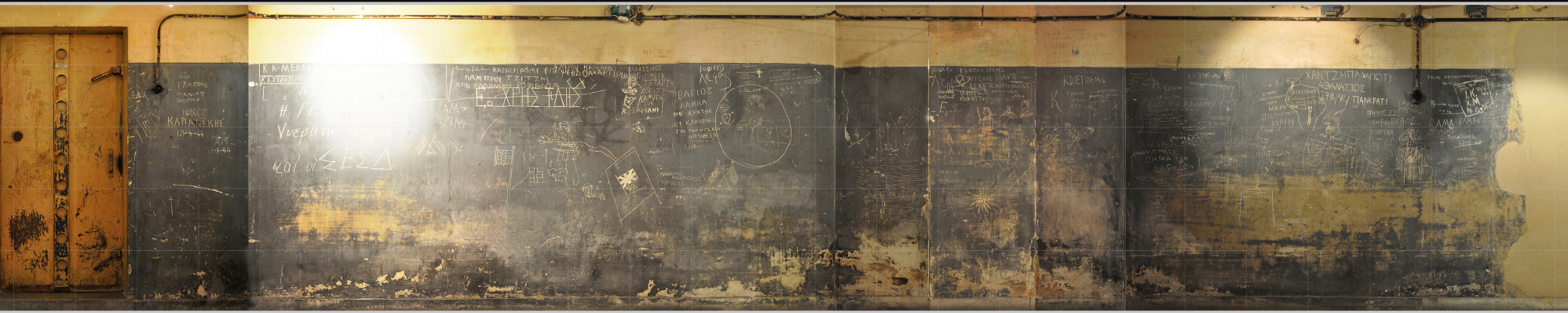
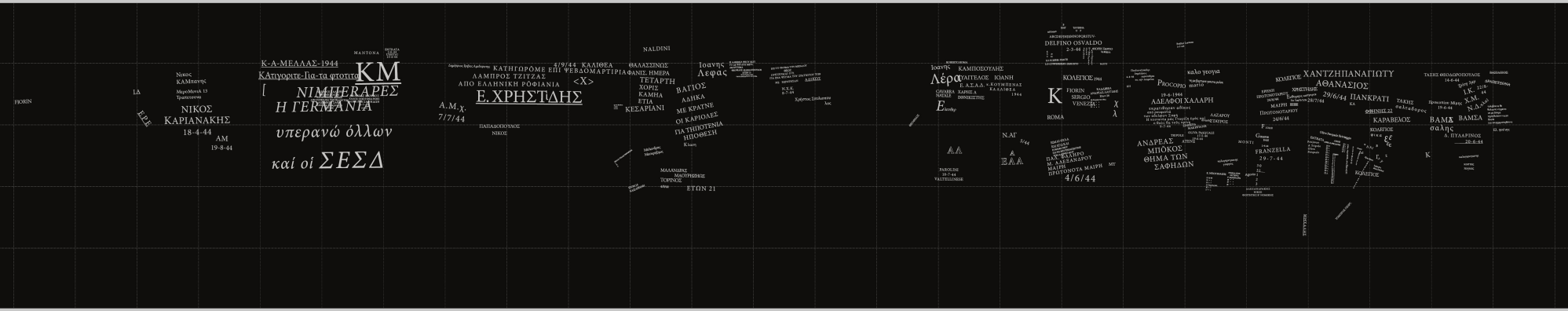
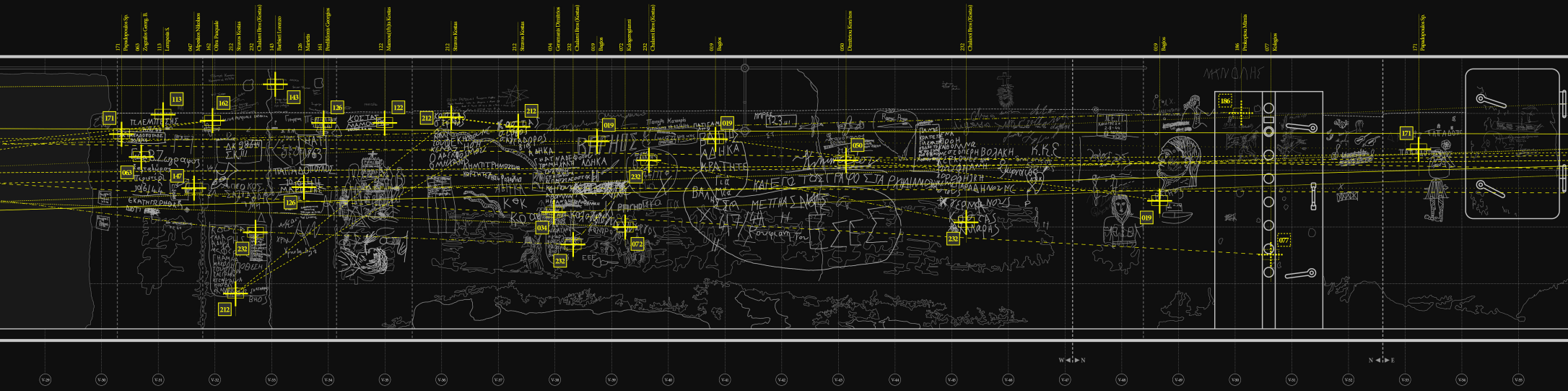
239 Psounis Eleftherios
143 Barbieri Lorenzo
035 Georgakopoulos G
074 Kampanis Nikos
085 Kartanakis Nikos
135 Mellas K-A
232 Chalaroi Bros (Kostas)
149 Mpoulakos Andreas
219 Tzitzas Lampros
236 Christidas Efthimios
019 Bagios
239 Psounis Eleftherios
104 Kourmpenas K.
189 Protonotariou Maria
077 Kolegios
227 Fiorini Sergio
227 Fiorini Sergio
149 Mpoulakos Andreas
232 Chalaroi Bros (Kostas)
162 Oliva Pasquale
143 Barbieri Lorenzo
072 Kalogeropianni
227 Fiorini Sergio
228 Franzella
162 Oliva Pasquale
162 Oliva Pasquale
245 Elias Lampros
077 Kolegios
186 Prokopiou Mimis
072 Kalogeropianni
181 Pogkas K.
239 Psounis Eleftherios
S ◂ ▸ W




FIORIN
ΕΡΕ
Νικος ΚΑΜπανης
ΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΑΡΙΑΝΑΚΗΣ 18-4-44
ΑΜ 19-8-44
Κ-Α-ΜΕΛΛΑΣ-1944
ΚΑτιγορίτε-Πια-τα φτοτιτα
ΚΜ
ΝΙΜΠΕΡΑΡΕΣ
Η ΓΕRΜΑΝΙΑ
υπερανώ όλλων
καί οί ΣΕΣΔ
ΜΑΝΤΟΝΑ
Α.Μ.Χ. 7/7/44
ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΟΜΕ ΕΠΙ ΨΕΒΔΟΜΑΡΤΙΡΙΑ
4/9/44 ΚΑΛΙΘΕΑ
ΛΑΜΠΡΟΣ ΤΖΙΤΖΑΣ
ΑΠΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΡΟΦΙΑΝΙΑ
<Χ>
Ε. ΧΡΗΣΤΙΔΗΣ
ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΣ
NALDINI
ΘΑΛΑΣΣΙΝΟΣ
ΦΑΝΙΣ. ΗΜΕΡΑ ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ
ΧΟΡΙΣ ΚΑΜΗΑ ΕΤΙΑ
ΚΕΣΑΡΙΑΝΙ
Ιοανης Λεφας
ΒΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΔΙΚΑ ΜΕ ΚΡΑΤΝΕ ΟΙ ΚΑΡΙΟΛΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΠΟΤΕΝΙΑ ΗΠΟΘΕΣΗ
ΜΑΛΑΝΔΡΑΣ ΜΑΟΥΡΕΖΗΣ ΤΟΡΙΝΟΣ ΕΤΩΝ 21
Ιοαννης Λέρο
ΚΑΜΠΟΣΟΥΛΗΣ ΤΑΙΓΕΤΟΣ ΙΟΑΝΗ
Ε.Α.Σ.Α.Δ.
DELFINO OSVALDO
ΚΟΛΕΓΙΟΣ 1944
K
FIORIN SERGIO VENEZIA
ROMA
PAROLINI VALTELLINESE
Ν.ΑΓ
ΕΑΑ
ΠΑΝ. ΚΑΛΑΝΔΡΟΥ
ΠΡΩΤΟΝΟΤΑ ΜΑΙΡΗ 4/6/44
καλο γεογια
PROCOPIO
ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ ΧΑΛΑΡΗ
ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ ΜΠΟΚΟΣ ΘΗΜΑ ΤΩΝ ΣΑΦΗΔΩΝ
FRANZELLA 29-7-44
ΚΟΛΕΓΙΟΣ
ΧΑΝΤΖΗΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΥ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ
29/6/44 ΠΑΝΚΡΑΤΙ
ΚΑΡΑΒΕΛΟΣ
ΤΑΚΗΣ ΦΕΟΔΩΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ 14-6-44
Ι.Κ. Χ.Μ. Ν.Δ.
ΒΑΜΣΑ
ΒΑΜΣ
Δ. ΠΥΛΑΡΙΝΟΣ 20-6-44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047 Mpeskos Nikolaos
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212 Stravos Kostas
232 Chalaroi Bros (Kostas)
143 Barbieri Lorenzo
126 Mariettis
161 Perdikionis Georgios
122 Mamou(th)is Kostas
212 Stravos Kostas
212 Stravos Kostas
034 Geramanis Dimitrios
232 Chalaroi Bros (Kostas)
019 Bagios
072 Kalogerogianni
232 Chalaroi Bros (Kostas)
019 Bagios
050 Dimitriou Kon/nos
232 Chalaroi Bros (Kostas)
019 Bagios
186 Prokopiou Mimis
077 Kolegios
171 Papadopoulos Sp.
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113
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Π.ΛΕΜΠΕΣΗΣ
14/4/44
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30/8/44
19/8/44
Γεώρ. ΒΖωγράφος
Σαλταδώρος
Περιστέρι
30/6/44
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Παντελής Κατσαρός
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Κ. Ιωσηφάκης
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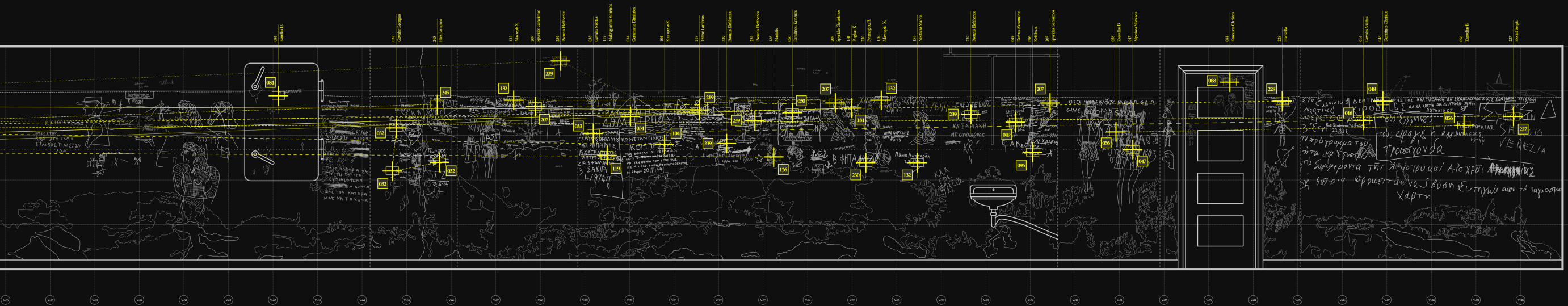
Ιωαννης






ΚΑΤΑΔΙΚΟΣ
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264
Γεώργιος
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Petrino
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5/8/44
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20/8/44
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Χ. ΜΑΥΡΕΠΗΣ
Κουτσόγερος Μιχαήλ
Στραβοπόδης
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Κωνσταντίνος Δημητρίου
Εν σηροτροφείον 20/4/44
Σκαραμαγκά Από
ρουφιανιά και από μιθουκα
Κ. ΠΟΓΚΑΣ
SALDARELLI
ΜΑΥΡΕΠΗΣ 22/8/44
Καρετζης Δημη
26/6/44
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ΔΗΜ. ΚΑΡΥΔΗΣ
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1-7-44
Β. ΦΗΤΑΝΟΓΛΟ
Μάριος Νικηταράς
29/6/44
Κ.Κ.Κ.
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Μπέσκος
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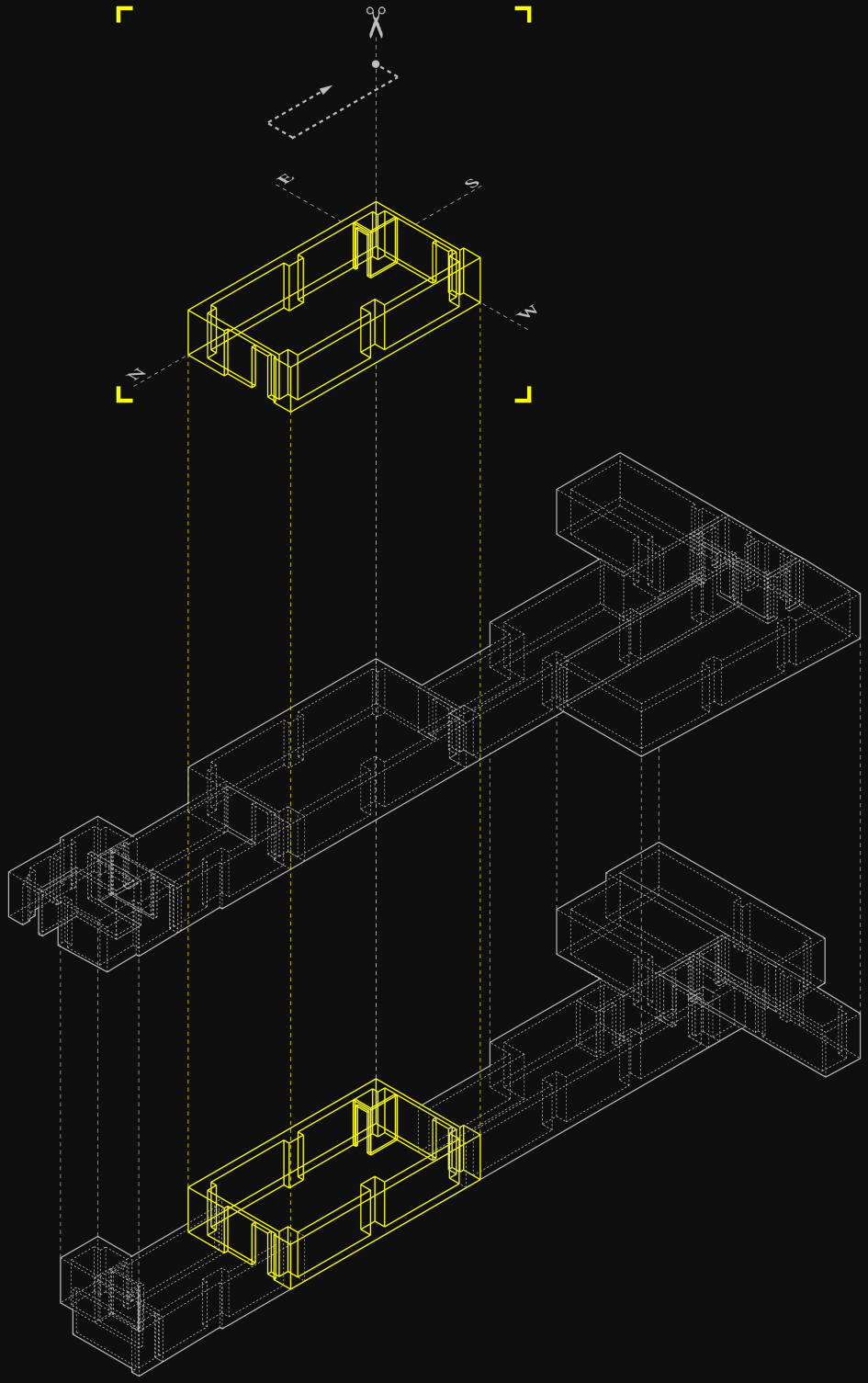
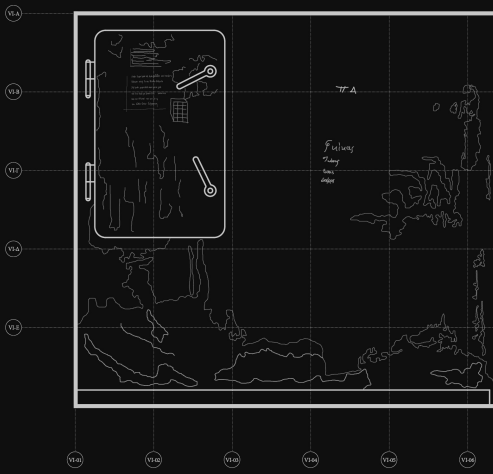
Κ. ΡΟΔΙΤΕΣ
ΑΔΙΚΑ ΚΑΤΙΘ ΔΙΑ 1 ΑΤΟΦΙΟ 31/8/44
ΒΟΤΑΝΙΚΟΣ
τους Έλληνες
τούς εφάγε η αγγλική
Β.ΖΑΡΟΥΛΙΑΣ
ΑΘΩΟΣ
1-9-44
ΣΕΣΔ
FIORIN
SERGIO
VENEZIA
το πρόγραμμα του
ήτο νά εξυπερεῖ
προπαγανδα
τα Συμφεροντα τῆς Απίστου καί Αισχρᾶς ~~Αγγλίας~~
η οποία πρόκειται να σβύση ευτηχώς από τό παγκόσμιο
χάρτη

1.2.5-06. K4 Physical Texts: Room VI Panorama (1:20)




VI-A
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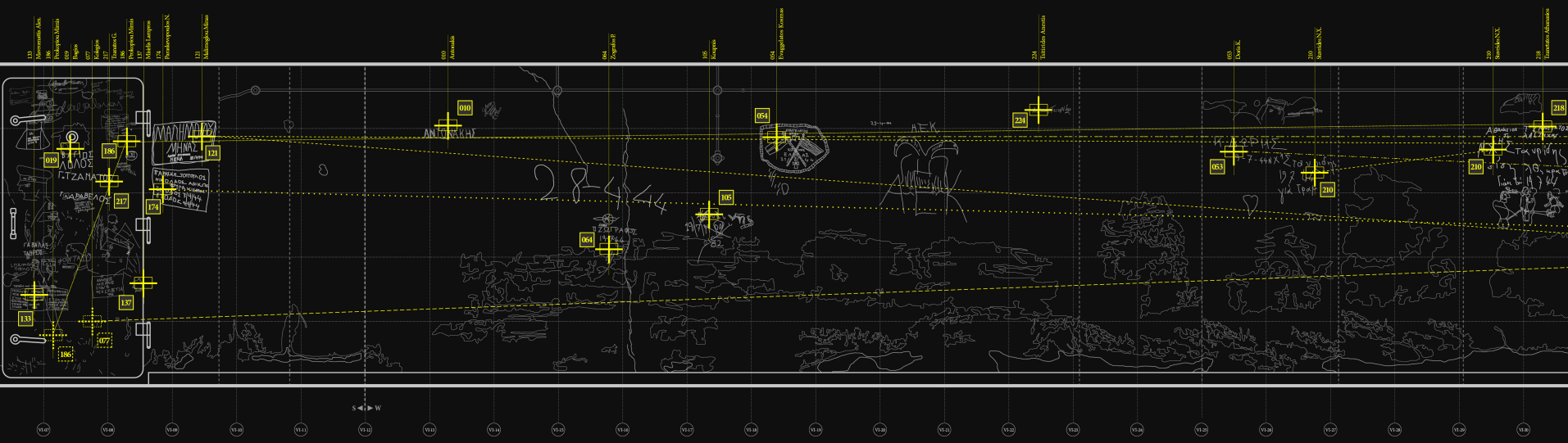
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186 Prokopiou Mimis
019 Bagios
077 Kolegios
217 Tzanatos G.
186 Prokopiou Mimis
137 Misirlis Lampros
174 Paraskevopoulos N.
121 Malimoglou Minas
010 Antonakis
064 Zografos P.
105 Koupnis
054 Evaggelatos Kosmas
224 Tsitirides Anestis
053 Doris K.
210 Stavrides N.X.
210 Stavrides N.X.
218 Tzanetatos Athanasios
019
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S ◀ ▶ W
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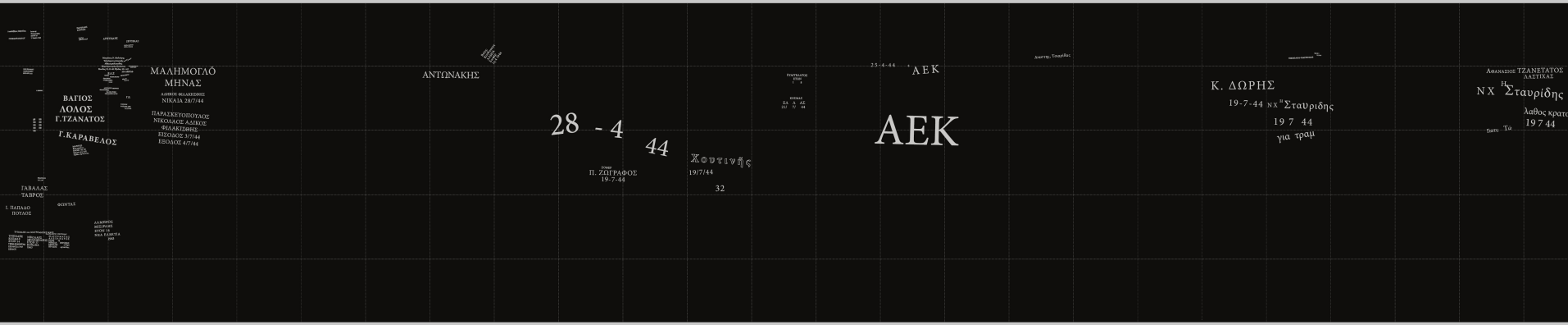
ΒΑΓΙΟΣ
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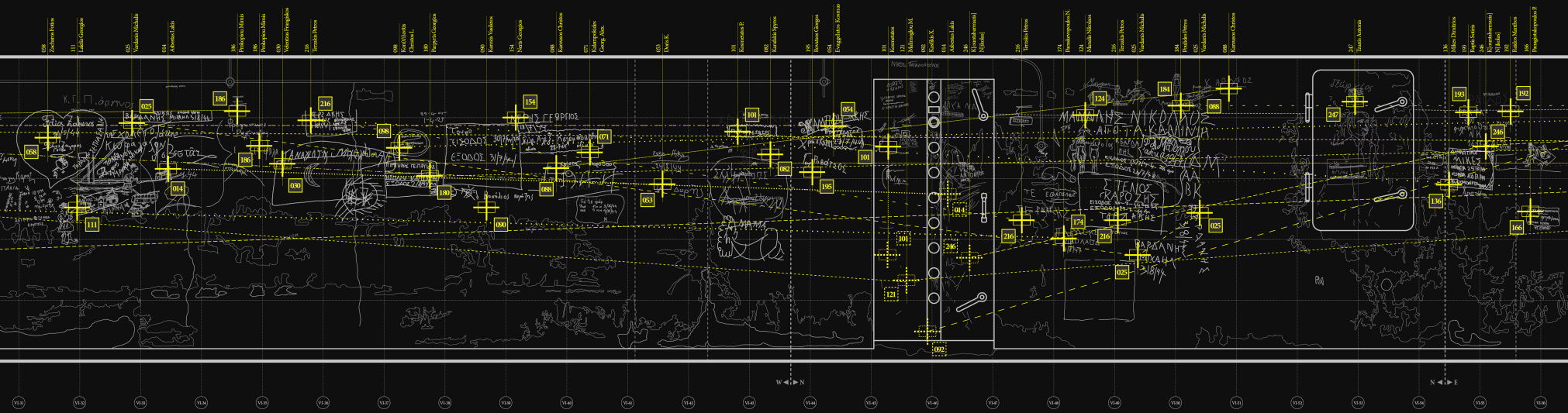
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111 Lakilis Georgios
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014 Asbestas Lakis
186 Prokopiou Mimis
186 Prokopiou Mimis
030 Velentzas Frangiskos
216 Terzakis Petros
098 Kon(st)antis Christos L.
180 Parpyris Georgios
090 Karozis Vasileios
154 Neris Georgios
088 Karousos Christos
071 Kalampokides Georg. Alex.
053 Doris K.
101 Kosmetatos P.
082 Karafakis Spyros
195 Rovatsos Giorgos
054 Evaggelatos Kosmas
101 Kosmetatos
121 Malamoglou M.
092 Kasfikis X.
014 Asbestas Lakis
246 K[ountabarmazis] N[ikolas]
216 Terzakis Petros
174 Paraskevopoulos N.
124 Manalis Nikolaos
216 Terzakis Petros
025 Vardanis Michalis
184 Poulides Petros
025 Vardanis Michalis
088 Karousos Christos
247 Tzanis Antonis
136 Mikes Dimitrios
193 Rapsis Sotiris
246 K[ountabarmazis] N[ikolas]
192 Raidos Manthos
166 Panagiotakopoulos P.
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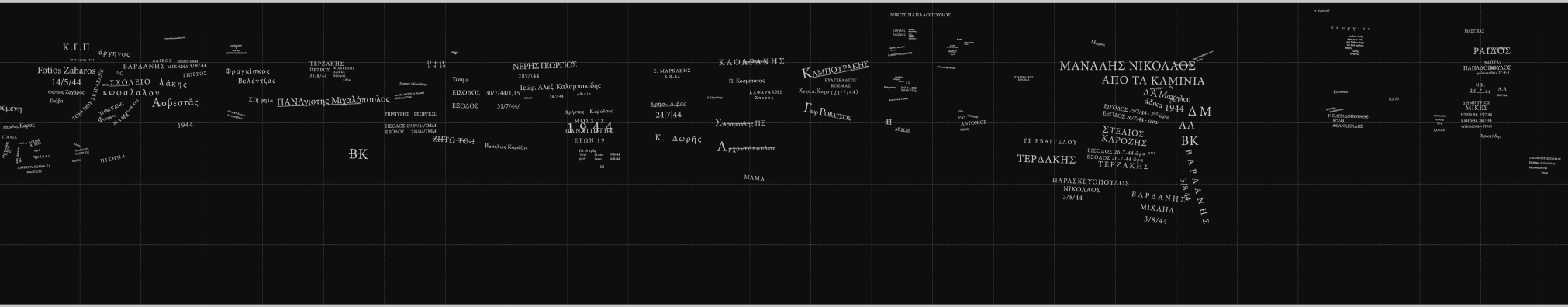
Κ.Γ.Π.
άργηνος
Fotios Zaharos
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Φώτιος Ζαχάρος
Γούβα
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ΣΤη φηλα
ΠΑΝΑγιοτης Μιχαλόπουλος
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ΝΕΡΗΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ
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Γεώρ. Αλεξ. Καλαμπακίδης
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Χρήστος Καρούσος
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Σ. ΜΑΡΚΑΚΗΣ
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Χρήσ- Δίβας
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Κ. Δωρῆς
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Χρησ.Λ.Κωνσ (21/7/44)
Γεωρ ΡΟΒΑΤΣΟΣ
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ΕΞΟΔΟΣ 26-7-44 ώρα
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ΒΑΡΔΑΝΗΣ
3/8/44
Γεωργιος
Γ. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ
ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑΔΗΣ
ΜΑΣΤΙΧΑΣ
ΡΑΪΔΟΣ
ΡΑΠΤΑ
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Ν.Κ.
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Α.Α
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ΜΙΚΕΣ
ΗΣΟΔΟΣ 25|7|44
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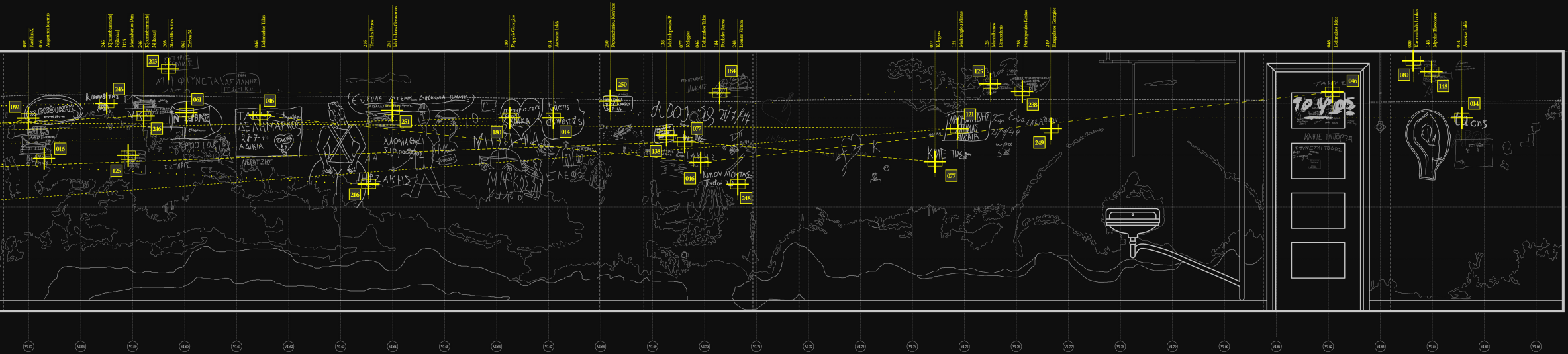
ΥΠΟΜΟΝΗ ΤΡΑΜ
Χριστίδης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016 Augerinos Ioannis
246 K[ountabernazis] N[ikolas]
125 Mantalvanos Dim
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203 Skordilis Sotiris
061 Zerbas N.
046 Delimarkos Takis
216 Terzakis Petros
251 Michalatos Gerasimos
180 Pirpiris Georgios
014 Aswestas Lakis
250 Papazachariou Konstinos
138 Michalopoulos P.
077 Kolegios
046 Delimarkos Takis
184 Poulides Petros
248 Lionatis Kimon
077 Kolegios
121 Malimoglou Minas
125 Mantalbanos Dimosthenis
238 Psimopoulos Kostas
249 Euaggelatos Georgios
046 Delimarkos Takis
080 Karamichalis Loukas
148 Mpolas Theodoros
014 Aswestas Lakis
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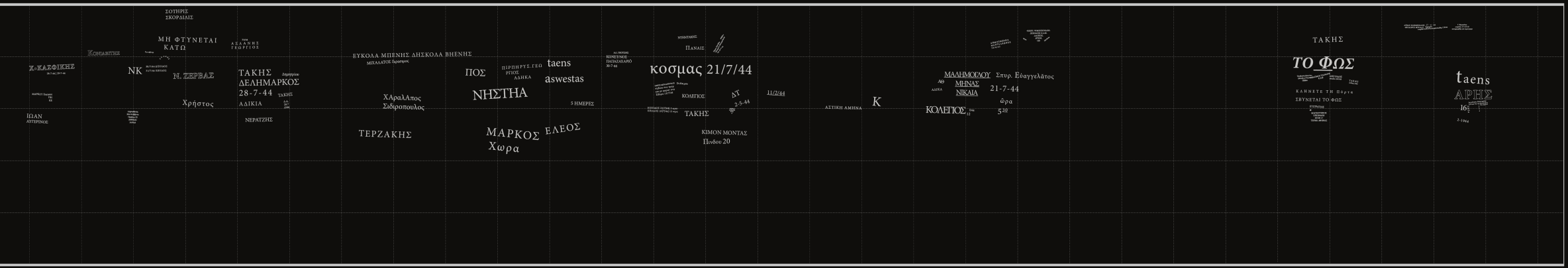
ΤΟ ΨΩΣ

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Χ. ΚΑΣΦΙΚΗΣ
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Ν. ΖΕΡΒΑΣ
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ΑΔΙΚΙΑ
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ΧΑραλΑπος
Σιδιροπουλος
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κοσμας 21/7/44
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Σπυρ. Εὐαγγελᾶτος
21-7-44
ὥρα
5³⁰
ΤΑΚΗΣ
ΤΟ ΦΩΣ
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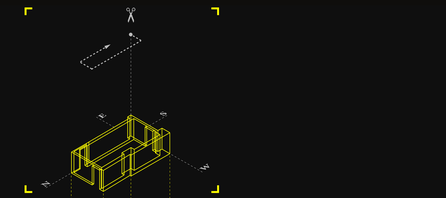
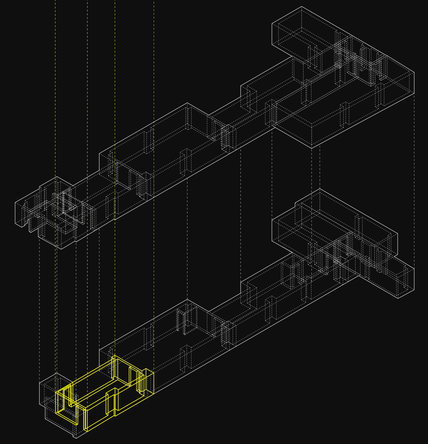
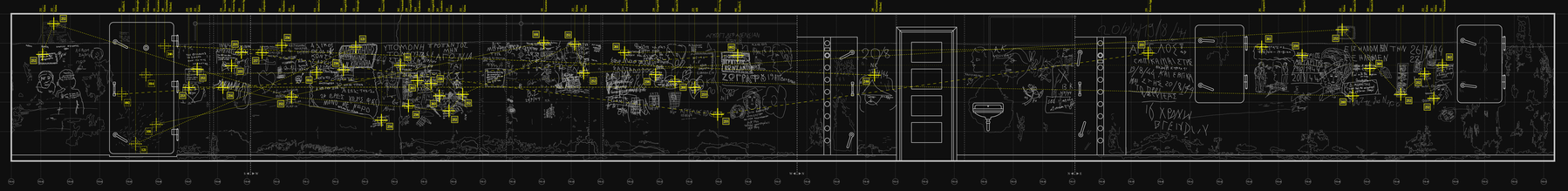
ΑΡΗΣ
16
2-1944

1.2.5-01_K4 Physical Texts_Room VII Panorama [1:20]











1.2.6. Rooms with Panoramic View: Bringing the Outside In and Pointing from Inside Out

During my consecutive visits in K4, in order to document all inscriptions, I closed the doors that separate the spaces and photographically 'scanned' each room separately, as a singular continuous surface, as an 'unfolding' of its surfaces. When I started drawing K4's walls, I initially used conventional architectural sections. It quickly became obvious, however, that the sections could neither show all the walls nor communicate the sense of confinement in each space.[128] These restrictions lead me draw each room separately and represent it as an 'interior panorama.'

As I was staring at the panoramic drawings, I wondered whether the writings aimed to transform the interior surfaces of each room into panoramic decorative wallpapers. Of course, the wallpaper panoramas are made of vivid colours and depict natural landscapes in a very realistic manner to give an illusion of the outer world. I feel that the inscriptions of the detention centre are, somehow, serving the same purpose: they attempt to bring the outside world inside and cancel the very nature of walls. The hieroglyphic images help inmates to forget that the walls operate as elements of confinement or that they are walls in the first place. In a sense, by putting inscriptions on the dark surfaces, prisoners might have tried to transform them in order to achieve what Georges Perec has so poetically described in the following words: "I put a picture up on a wall. Then I forget there is a wall. I no longer know there is a wall, I no longer know this wall is a wall, I no longer know what a wall is".[129]

In her book *Atlas of Emotion*, visual studies scholar Giuliana Bruno discusses how wallpapers in the late eighteenth century Europe transform the experience of interior spaces. For Bruno, panoramic wallpapers "reframed the inside as an outside" and, in a sense, they made the exterior interior.[130] At the same time, these visually inviting panoramas break the limits of the walls transforming them into "windows and screens".[131] Inhabitants not only could view and experience the outside from the comfort of the inside but are also able to project their desires on this interior universe while having the feeling they 'own' the exterior. As Bruno argues, this leads to the collapse of the enclosure of the interior, as the resident could be both physically inside and also mentally outside.

Bernard Comment, in his detailed study that examines the history and development of panorama structures, argues that the panorama since its invention in 1787 has been associated to entertainment through the illusion of escape it provided.[132] In the context of the industrialised city and the emergence of metropolitan life – a period during which the horizon disappears from cities – the panorama provides a way of "regaining control of sprawling collective space".[133] For Comment, the panorama even though it seemingly sought to be an accurate painterly representation of reality, in fact it idealised reality to enable spectators to re-appropriate their town. The image of the outside is distorted, reinvented and reconstructed to serve the needs of the inside. Is this not what K4's inscriptions try to achieve? Create a more attractive – even idealised – version of the outside world and bring it in? Or even, permit detainees to travel outside without leaving the dungeons? That's the reason why K4 inmates draw, despite their graphic abstraction, natural landscapes and idealised representations of the everyday life in Athens. Mutatis mutandis, as is the case with the nineteenth century metropolises' residents who visit the panoramas to escape reality, in K4 the walls are transformed into panoramas to replace reality.

128 This is the case for two reasons: firstly, the geometry of the space – since neither a longitudinal section is able to show several walls nor supplementary cross sections would work as they would make it too complex to read – and secondly due to the fact that when K4 operated as a detention centre the movement of the inmates was restricted within each room, and thus a section drawing would immediately cancel this condition.

129 Perec, G. (1997/1974). *Species of Spaces and other Pieces* (J. Sturrock, Trans.). London: Penguin. p. 39.

130 Bruno, G. (2002). *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. New York, NY: Verso. p. 166.

131 Bruno, G. (2002). *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. New York, NY: Verso. p. 169.

132 The nineteenth century panorama is an enclosed area which consists of a continuous circular canvas with a realistically painted landscape and a specially designed rotunda structure to accommodate it allowing some natural light to come in from the top. One would walk in through a corridor to reach a platform from which s/he could enjoy the 360o spectacle. This gradual, if not ritualistic, process aimed to make the visitor to forget the outside world and to be immersed to this completely coherent, albeit artificial, reality.

133 Comment, B. (1999). *The Panorama* (A. M. Glasheen, Trans.). London: Reaktion. p. 8.



War imagery: airplanes bombarding and frigates fighting back. Left: Room V-β73. Right: Room V-γ17.



A horse depicted in Room IV-γ36.



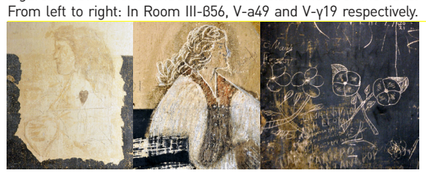
Left: A tiny depiction of a torched Athenian district in Room III-γ91. Right: 'Round-up in Drogouti' by Kostas Plakotaris (1942).

067 K08

068 K08

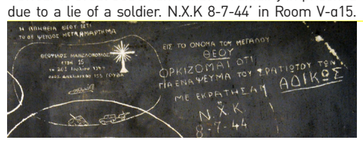
069 K08

Figures of beloved ones and scenes of the outside world on the walls. From left to right: In Room III-β56, V-α49 and V-γ19 respectively.

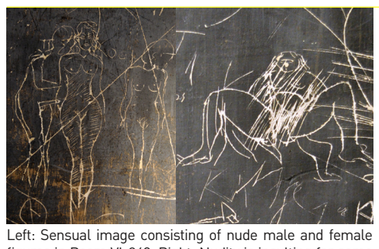


070 K08

'I swear to Great God's name that I'm unfairly imprisoned due to a lie of a soldier. N.X.K 8-7-44' in Room V-α15.



071 K08



Left: Sensual image consisting of nude male and female figures in Room VI-β48. Right: Nudity is insulting for some inmates and thus not tolerated. A censored vulgar image in Room VII-γ15.

072 K08

134

Comment, B. (1999). *The Panorama* (A. M. Glasheen, Trans.). London: Reaktion. p. 102.

Surprisingly, the themes of most writings are not war-related. Yet, some figurative ones depict images of the dramatic everyday life in occupied Athens: a house on fire **[067]**, battleships and frigates, tanks, and fight aircrafts **[068]**. Prisoners also draw on the walls domestic animals (e.g., rabbits, chickens, dogs, horses etc.) which are extinct in occupied Athens as they are killed to be eaten by the starving population **[069]**. Others carve the bright side of the world on the surfaces: blossoming flowers, portraits of their beloved ones, the places they used to live or always wanted to visit **[070]**. Some others feel that the situation is overwhelming and turn to God; they swear innocence while asking for help and forgiveness **[071]**. In K4, human needs are magnified. Inmates miss the intimate or erotic and draw nude silhouettes to keep them company. Some other prisoners, however, 'censor' and deface these images when they find them insulting - these often depict nude women or phalluses **[072]**.

As its etymology suggests – deriving the Greek 'pan' (all) and 'horama' (to see) – the panorama means to 'see all', to 'see everything'. As Comment asserts, the panorama abolishes the traditional painterly frame in favour of a comprehensive, uninterrupted area of representation which aimed to "transport the spectators to different places which they took to be reality".[134] Of course, the 'panoramas' of K4's walls are not giving the illusion of the whole; they are more like collages of idiosyncratically chosen parts of the outside. They are autonomous and self-sufficient compositions of the external world. The inscriptions transform the walls of each room into a spontaneous series of images: a fragmented, yet not less comprehensive, representation of occupied Athens. While the shut doors and windows create an inescapable enclosure, the intimate scribed hieroglyphic images create a new visual landscape which provides the much needed anchors for mental escapes.

If the postal letters that inmates write to their beloved ones are means to export the inside world out then the writings on the walls are the ways to import the outside in. Prisoners use, or rather exploit, everyday imagery of the outside world and bring it onto the walls to appropriate these spaces. This is perhaps the most basic way possible to resist to their captivity condition. In so doing, the different surfaces of each room become a continuous, self-sufficient one. Yet, this does not mean that each room is isolated; quite the contrary. These 'panoramas' connect the interior surfaces with a series of other surfaces out there: the exterior Athenian walls, the interior walls in Merlin detention centre and so on, thus suggesting a complex network. The inscriptions transform the spaces of confinement to rooms with an idealised, invented panoramic view of occupied Athens.

1.2.7. Biographies on/of the Walls: Journeying Around or Escaping the Room?

When I started examining in depth the content of the inscriptions on the walls of K4, I felt that I had to transform my photographic images into texts. To do so, I digitally typed the word over each inscription I could identify and decipher. I utilised the same font because I treated all individual writings as a collective one, but I changed the size and boldness of each word or letter in an attempt to register the dynamism of the inscriptions. Also, each word was rotated in order to grasp the trajectory of the physical inscription.

This process resulted in seven oblong (one per room), landscape format, sheets with digitally 'searchable' texts that look like concrete poems, resembling the spatial writing of Stéphane Mallarmé. In all sheets I made a search for each individual (sur)name and the 'texts' started revealing association primarily within each room and sometimes across all the spaces of the K4: a hidden choreography of movements.[135] In a sense, these recurring texts suggest, or rather register, peripatetic experiences in each room which also have constant reference to the city outside the basements **[073]**. When one connects the 'dots', i.e. drawing lines between the places where the same person has left his or her marks, a sort of celestial atlas reveals itself. It is as if the movements in place present the passing of time in the cell. By way of star trail photography, space and time collapse in each other; what we are left with is an unrepeatable, imagined trace. In this condition of confinement, the rooms become micro-cosmoses and the traces allow us to read the movement of time by visually reconstructing the movements in space.

Although the aforementioned 'text-based' transcription was a very important step in order to document the writings, I felt that it was insufficient because it cancels the hieroglyphic nature of inscriptions and, as a representation, ignores both the materiality and all the other signs of the walls. This is the reason why I have chosen to trace over the inscriptions while doing the same for other signs and architectural elements as well. The blatant absence of writings in Rooms I and II – which were not used as detention spaces but rather as Nazis offices – emphatically reveals that those who occupied them strategically ensured that no traces of their presence would be left behind. This is in stark contrast to the ones from the other Rooms where the traces of the inmates' existence are overwhelming.

Regardless of their content and theme, all writings are characterised by brevity, probably due to both the dangerousness and difficulty of writing on these walls.[136] Images and graphisms, scribbled letters and misspelled words, personal names and dates, or rather, all kinds of personal stories, were inscribed on the walls. Poems, names of betrayers, wishes and requests, all coexist on the same surface **[074]**. Some prisoners aggressively offend the Occupiers and the centre's guards, some express their despair about the detention conditions and ask for help, while others who feel forgotten due to their isolation from the outer world inscribe on the surfaces their loneliness **[075]**.

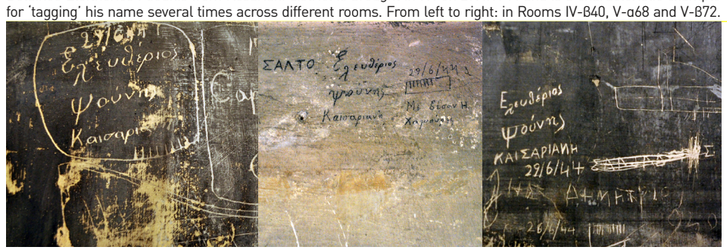
By way of travelogues, many writings inform the viewer where do their authors come from and how they ended up in these basements.[137] The district or the street where the imprisoned got caught, and sometimes even exact home addresses are inscribed on K4 surfaces weaving a chaotic network of places, times and personal stories with constant reference to the outside world **[076]**. Reading all these names and addresses while thinking their relationship with the outside world, one is left wondering: did the law student Nikos Alexandrakis – who carved his

The inmates' names are presented numbered in the drawings to facilitate their finding. The numbering system adopted follows the official list of K4. Available at: http://korai4.gr/archive/prisoners/. Accessed: 15 September 2016.

135

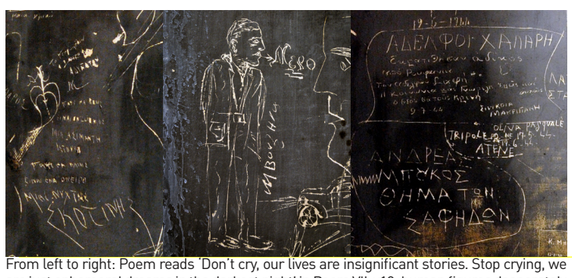
Detainee Eleftherios Psounis from Kesariani district is brought in K4 on 29.4.1944 and is a characteristic example for 'tagging' his name several times across different rooms. From left to right: in Rooms IV-β40, V-α68 and V-β72.

073
K08



Striking is the complete absence of writings showing affiliations with or reference to resistance organisations. This is probably happening because the organised detainees are afraid of being identified as such by possible undercover collaborationists who might have been deliberately placed in the dungeons with them. See also Varmazis, N. (2014). *A Prison at the Dungeons of the Gestapo*. Athens: Unpublished notes. [in Greek].

136



074
K08

From left to right: Poem reads 'Don't cry, our lives are insignificant stories. Stop crying, we are just ephemeral dreams in the darkest night' in Room VII-γ19; human figures desperately asks for water in Room VII-β43; 'Chalari Brothers - Unjustly accused due to the betrayal of the Safi brothers - Society knows us, God will judge them - 9-7-44, Makrigiani District' and 'Andreas Mpoukos - Victim of the Safi brothers' write the betrayed detainees in Room V-β21.

075
K08



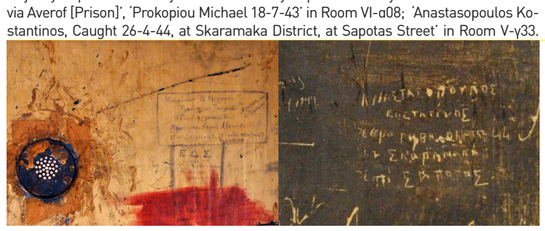
'There no friends any more, and everyone forgets you' confesses detainee Karousos in his loneliness in Room V-α83.

The frequent reference to particular areas – such as Kesariani and Vyronas, among others – points to the Eastern districts of Athens where the National Resistance Movement is very active.

137

Graffiti travelogues. From left to right: 'Mavrikios N. Malevris. Medicine Senior Student. Unjustly Imprisoned. Martyrdoms of the Holy Inquisition. Entry 15-12-42. Exit 10-1-43 via Averof [Prison]', 'Prokopiou Michael 18-7-43' in Room VI-α08; 'Anastasopoulos Kostantinos, Caught 26-4-44, at Skaramaka District, at Sapotas Street' in Room V-γ33.

076
K08



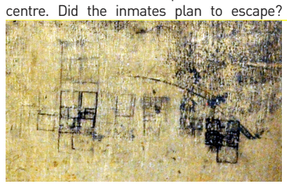
Left: 'Alexandrakis Nikos - 2nd year Law student' in Room V-δ23. Right: A slogan at Zaimi St in Exarcheia district commemorating the assassinated law student M. Konstantinidis and asking for revenge.

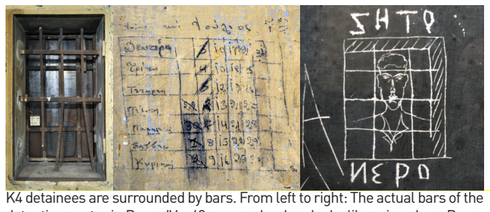
077
K08
D09



In Room III-δ95 one can see shapes and lines that look like a kind of map of the detention centre. Did the inmates plan to escape?

078
K08



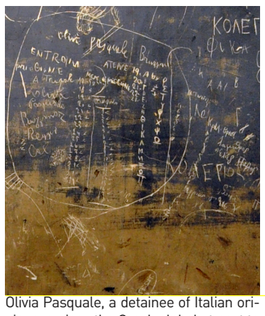


079
K08

K4 detainees are surrounded by bars. From left to right: The actual bars of the detention centre in Room IV-α48; even calendars looks like prison bars Room IV-β33; a prisoner asking for water depicted behind bars in Room VII-γ22.

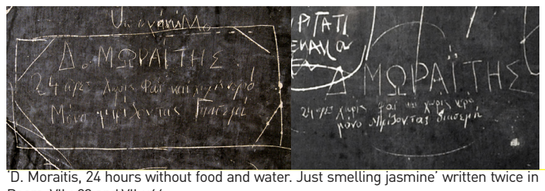
138

Giuliana Bruno studies Xavier de Maistre's 'fictional autobiography' as a paradigmatic case of a creative negotiation of an interior – planned for detention – space. Aristocrat Xavier de Maistre (1763-1852), while serving the army in 1790, participates in a fight and gets arrested in Turin. For this reason he is convicted to home confinement for six weeks. For more see de Maistre, X. (1871/1794). *A Journey Round My Room* (H. Attwell, Trans.). New York, NY: Hurd & Houghton.



081
K08

Olivia Pasquale, a detainee of Italian origin, exercises the Greek alphabet next to the Latin.

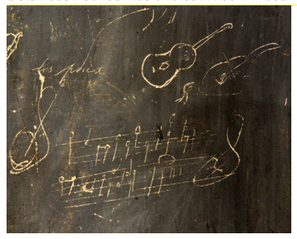


080
K08

'D. Moraitis, 24 hours without food and water. Just smelling jasmine' written twice in Room VII-γ23 and VII-γ46.

Detainees inscribe music notes in Room V-δ52.

082
K08





083
K08

'Petros Poulidis, War Photojournalist, 14-7-1944' written in two different occasions in Room VI-α50 and VI-α70 respectively.

139

The presence of Poulidis in K4's basements emphatically shows that photography is a criminal offence during the Occupation and demonstrates why the visual material from that period is relatively limited. Petros Poulidis (1885-1967) is the first self-proclaimed photojournalist in Greece. He serves photographic art throughout his life and becomes famous notably because he captures the turbulent everyday life in Athens during the Balkan Wars and the Interwar period. For more details on Poulidis' work, his contribution to photography and his role in the documentation of Greek history, see Arseni, K. (2004). *Athens Between the Wars Through the Photographs of Petros Poulidis* (A. Kokkou, Ed.; D. Hardie, Trans). Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece.

140

This is not surprising, however, given that the schools in Athens during the occupation did not operate on a daily basis. Due to the difficult circumstances, in several occasions they opened for only three months per year, thus creating generations of illiterates.

name on the walls of Room V – happened to know his co-student M. Konstantinidis who was assassinated by the Occupation army at Zaimi St on 22.12.42? **[077]** Did they ever have the chance to talk to each other before all this happened? In a sense, K4 inscriptions talk to other writings beyond the walls, outside the centre, suggesting a complex nexus of meaning that stems from geographically dispersed surfaces.

In Room III one witnesses some strange shapes resembling architectural plans **[078]**. Are these meant to be the plans of the detention centre? Did the inmates thought ways of breaking out? Or were they trying invent means to communicate with peers held in other rooms, or are these shapes the plans of a prisoner's own home? But, one might wonder: is there a way to escape from here? Not really, as bars are literally everywhere: on the windows, the doors, the inscriptions; even the diaries that the inmates create look like bars **[079]**. There is no way to escape physically. But how about mentally? Can the restrictions imposed in movement be bypassed by leaps of imagination or manoeuvres of mind?

This form of 'mental travelling' which seems to be at play in K4 resembles Xavier de Maistre's novel *Journey around My Room*.[138] In this book, de Maistre narrates his quite comfortable, if not luxurious, home detention. De Maistre wanders around his "parallelogram room of thirty-six steps round" and, for the 42 days of his incarceration, writes daily about these 'voyages'. As he travels his room, he describes the images and objects he encounters in this 'journey' which rarely follows a "straight line": wall pictures, furniture, vistas and so on. This physically limited journey becomes a fantastic grand travel: upon the everyday objects and the taken-for-granted vistas, de Maistre projects scenes from distant, unknown, exterior lands. In so doing, he mentally escapes the space and reinvents the meaning of the architectural space of his enclosure.

The differences, of course, between de Maistre and the K4's inmates are enormous, especially in terms of the confinement's conditions. Yet, they all invent stories to resist their situation: de Maistre writes these stories on the paper while K4's detainees inscribe them on the walls. Prisoners invent stories with vivid colours and smells in an attempt to mentally escape from the harsh conditions of their incarceration **[080]**. In Room V – where most of the inscriptions written in foreign languages appear – inmates take advantage of their time in K4 to learn the Greek alphabet and/or train how to spell their names in Greek, thus breaking their daily routines **[081]**. In the same room, others inscribe music scores and notes. In the absence of music instruments, the music can be performed only mentally, thus silently escaping the room through the doors of joy **[082]**.

The writings evince that all sort of people are held in K4 - people of different age, social status, political orientation, nationality and gender. For example, it is shocking reading the inscriptions of prisoners who are juveniles or even kids (e.g., 'Tripodis Kosmas, 14 years old' in Room VI-δ06). Also, amongst the writings some names of famous Athenians stand out **[083]**. For instance, two small pencil writings that appear on two different walls in Room VI read 'Petros Poulidis, War Photojournalist, 14-7-1944'.[139] The inscriptions also reveal the literate level of the time and, especially, of the inmates – which seems to be relatively low – except for some rare occasions of educated people with specific jobs that enjoy particular societal status (e.g., 'Mavrikios N. Malevris, Medicine Graduate' in Room VI-α08).[140] Also, these writings demonstrate the evolution of Greek language and some literature conventions. The most striking is probably the repetitive usage of the – outdated and no longer in use – ligature character 'ϐ' (spelled 'ou') which

has its roots in Byzantine religious iconography.

If Paul Ricoeur is right when arguing that "the most valuable traces are the ones that were not intended for our information", then these inscriptions are of primary importance.[141] Even if the detainees meant their words to be read and images to be seen, they had no other recipient in mind than their fellow prisoners. The intended audience is not the Germans, but those who could understand both the language and the experiences they inscribed. The language of inscriptions indicates that both Greeks and foreigners are held in K4's basements.[142]

The most prevalent group of writings, however, consists of dated signatures and names. In these inscriptions, we witness the primary instinct to mark presence and the primitive urge to create. In all these instances the aim is the same: stating one's presence and marking temporality; let others know that 'I was here' while also 'measuring' time in captivity.[143] These signatures are often accompanied by other personal information (e.g., dates or places of birth, home addresses, etc.) and, even more often, followed by the dates, and even exact times, when the person enters and leaves K4 basements. These tag-like names acquire a different meaning in the context of incarceration, let alone when captivity takes place in the context of war. By recognising specific daily routines in their life, the detainees utilise walls as calendars and count their days in prison so as not to lose the sense of time. Carving the days and crossing them is a key here: it is a daily marking, a marking of temporality. It is the rawest way possible to categorize and document daily experiences. In these basements where the notion of time is cancelled, through these inscriptions time gains a completely new meaning. These 'diaries' take the form of either calendars, where dates and days are written, or are mere lines that count the days under custody **[084]**.

141 Ricouer, P. (1990/1985). *Time and Narrative, Volume 3* (K. Mclaughlin & D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 117.

142 Some of the foreign writings probably belong to German deserters and/or Italian renegades, while others are written from people of various nationalities, such as French, Russian and Armenian. Still Greek language prevails and this fact reveals that the primary audience of the inscriptions was Greek-speakers.

143 Foivos Tsekeris vividly describes the moment when he felt that he would be executed and this gave raise to his urge to write on the wall letting others know he existed underlying once again how fundamental is this human need. He says that he found a small pencil in a hole on the wall with which he has written: 'Today 1-8-1943 is the last day of my life – Good bye – F.T.'. It was that very moment that he realised why it was so important for his co-detainees to carve their names on the walls. He also relates this ultimate attempt to leave a trace of existence with another common practice during the Occupation and the Civil War, when those who were convicted to death, a few moments prior to their execution, they used to put seeds into their pockets so that flowers would grow in the place of their corpses. Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students*. Athens: Entos. [in Greek]. p. 75.

Days reduced to mere lines. The simplest and crudest technique possible used to count the days in custody in Room IV-B58.

084
K08



1.2.8. Underground (Hiero)glyphs: From Text to Image and Back Again

The detainees write with all sorts of sharp objects and writing instruments available: pencils, glass pieces, spikes, hobnails, metal shoelaces and even their bare finger nails. Each writing instrument constrains the inscription in its own particular way. Further, with its unified aesthetics and materiality, the writing surface not only renders the graphisms indiscernible – while offering them a look similar to the artistic work of Alain Nahum and Rena Papaspyrou **[085]** – but also makes these inscriptions to look very similar to each other, as though they were executed by a single person. Due to the limited writing space available, these writings change their magnitudes and directions to adapt into the remaining surface without crossing over pre-existing graffiti. In so doing, they create what seems to be a unified, concrete poetry-like, text which – even though it consists of different handwriting styles – has a single author.

The interdependence between the graphic mark and writing surface leads photographer Brassaï – who has extensively documented public inscriptions in Paris during the interwar period – to claim that "it is the wall that gives to all these graffiti their stylistic unity, their family resemblance, as if they had been drawn by the same hand".[144] For him, it is neither the content nor the graphic look of urban writings that make them stylistically united. Rather, graffiti owe their likeness to the resemblance of Parisian walls. In other words, it is the material writing surface that renders them concurrently similar and unique.

In order to explore the surface conditions in K4, I have chosen to draw a part of a wall from Room V in 1:1 scale because it concentrates all sorts of inscriptions, both discursive and figurative, and several other marks **[086]**. It immediately became obvious that it is impossible to draw the writings without actually drawing the wall itself as a totality, including its materiality and depth, physical decay and lamination, and even the way light hits the surface affecting what I could perceive. The result resembles Jean Dubuffet's 'Walls' from his series *Phenomena* **[087]**.[145] And the way the graffiti wall is represented gradually reveals a natural landscape. The surface starts looking like a tense topography depicted with dense contours. The dynamic crack in the middle of the wall appears as a river while, at a micro scale, the difference between the inscriptions and wall is fused to such an extent that look like fiords, where one cannot say whether it is land or water, whether it is unmarked surface or writing. In a sense, it is not only what the writings say but also, if not primarily, how they look like.

Regardless of the individual and idiosyncratic character of each inscription, the writings are treated as 'glyphs' – i.e. sculpted marks or symbols, material shapes and representations of characters or graphemes – which are integral parts of the surface they occupy. By examining these writings one can challenge the categorical distinction between text and image, and understand that the line between them is fine and fused, or even non-existent. If we move beyond the standard reductive conceptualisation and use of the term 'hieroglyphic' – namely that refers to writings that are hard to decipher – the framing of these writings as hieroglyphs foregrounds the intimate relationship of image and text.

Writing historian Anne Marie Christin, in a short essay that traces the transformation of hieroglyphic writing into the alphabetic, argues that hieroglyphic graphic systems are tied to "the surface on which they appear".[146] Similarly, K4's graffiti seem to emanate from the surfaces they occupy. The incarcerated wall writers employ letterforms, or rather graphemes, in a manner that

Rena Papaspyrou. 'Image Through Matter' series (1982). Pencil on wall. 085

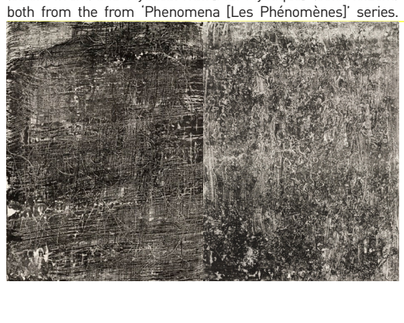




144
Brassaï. (2002/1964). *Graffiti* (D. Radzinowicz, Trans.). Paris: Flammarion. p. 151.

086
K08
A typical part of K4's surfaces occupied by inscriptions of various styles and magnitudes. In Room V covering Β32-γ33.

From left to right: Jean Dubuffet's lithographs 'The Wall [Le Mur]' (63.5x44.9cm) and 'Mystical Wall [Mur Mystique]' (63.5x45.2cm) both from the from 'Phenomena [Les Phénomènes]' series. 087



145
Jean Dubuffet's portfolio *The Elemental [L' Elémentaire]* from *Phenomena [Les Phénomènes]* consists of eighteen lithographs that the artist produced in 1958. Available at: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/portfolios/73454?locale=en. Accessed: 20 February 2016.

146
Christin, A. M. (2002). From Image to Writing. In A. M. Christin (Ed.), *A History of Writing: From Hieroglyph to Multimedia* (pp. 9-14). Paris: Flammarion. p. 9.

drive us to experience them as images rather than texts. The images of inscriptions, then, are to be read and to be seen at the same time.

Visual cultures scholar W.J.T. Mitchell sees writing as a "visible language" that can be understood discursively, i.e. as language, and figuratively, that is, as material visual image with aesthetic qualities.[147] In order to illustrate the antagonistic relation of word and image, Mitchell refers to the pictorial origins of contemporary alphabetic writing and, more specifically, to the hieroglyphic pictograms. In doing so, he highlights the reciprocity of the image-text,[148] or rather, puts emphasis on the possibility of understanding the text as image and of thinking writing not only through its verbal elements but also by it visual characteristics.

Mitchell believes that, generally, when we read a text we do not 'hear' or 'see' the words but we mainly focus on the meaning they convey. However, as he argues, "it is always possible to shift our attention, to let those black marks on a white background become objects of visual or aural attention".[149] For him, poetry and calligraphy are paradigmatic instances of writing during which the attention of the reader shifts from the content of the text to its aural qualities and graphic appearance respectively. The stylistic crudeness of the writings at K4's basement and the energy of the gestures imprinted on the surface evoke meanings that the content of the written words or depicted images alone would not be able to communicate. In a sense, it is not the mere written or figural content that is appreciated when one faces these inscriptions but also the act of marking, the gesture of producing these hieroglyphs.

Framing K4's writings as hieroglyphs brings to the fore the visual aspects of writing and allows us to move beyond the categorical limitations and binary oppositions of writing as either text or image. As Mitchell argues, word and image should be understood as a "dialectical trope": their relationship, their "difference and likeness", should be seen simultaneously through the notation "vs/as": word vs image, word as image.[150] In a sense, the conceptualisation of these inscriptions as hieroglyphics allows us focus on the interplay of content and graphic look, sound and visual appearance, because when encountering the writings on K4 walls, one's attention constantly slips from the text to the image and back again.

147 Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994). *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 113.

148 Mitchell is very cautious of the typographical conventions he employs to refer to the relationship of image and text. The slash (/) is used to "designate 'image/text' as a problematic gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation" while the hyphen (-) of "'image-text' designates relations of the visual and verbal"; the term 'imagetext' "designates composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text". Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994). *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 89.

149 Mitchell uses a typographic trick to emphasize his point here: he makes the letters bolder and considerably bigger compared to the rest of the essay. Mitchell, W.J.T. (1996). Word and Image. In R. S. Nelson & R. Shiff (Eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History* (pp. 47-56). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 47.

150 Mitchell, W.J.T. (1996). Word and Image. In R. S. Nelson & R. Shiff (Eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History* (pp. 47-56). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 53.

1.2.9-01. K4 Writing Gesture [1:1]

1.2.10. 4 Korai, Athens vs Reichstag, Berlin: Lost in Translation?

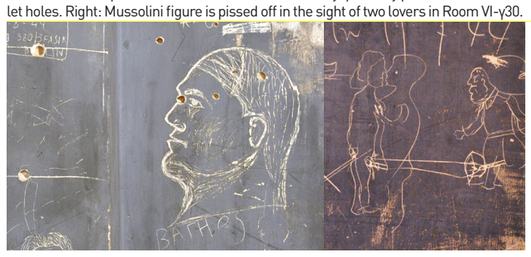


088
104

Left: Allies flags and wooden figures of Mussolini for sale in the streets of Athens. Right: Child wearing a National Youth Organization [Ethniki Organosis Neolaias] uniform, points at the wooden figure of Mussolini. ca 1941.

Left: A Mussolini portrait in Room V-848 surrounded by (probably post-liberation) bullet holes. Right: Mussolini figure is pissed off in the sight of two lovers in Room VI-γ30.

089
K08



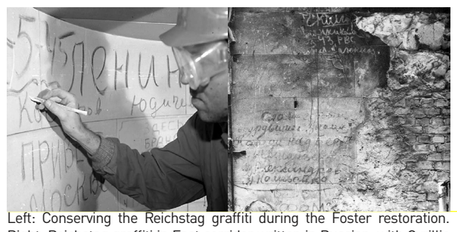
151

Baker, F. (2002). The Red Army Graffiti in the Reichstag, Berlin: Politics of Rock-Art in a Contemporary European Urban Landscape. In G. Nash & C. Chippindale (Eds.), *European Landscapes of Rock-Art* (pp. 20-38). London: Routledge. p. 20.



090
K08

Left: The K4 once completed in 1938. Right: The Reichstag and the Berlin Wall soon after the German reunification in 1989, before Foster's restoration and the addition of the new glass and steel cupola.

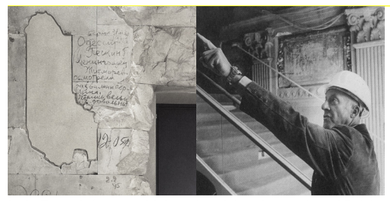


Left: Conserving the Reichstag graffiti during the Foster restoration. Right: Reichstag graffiti in East corridor written in Russian, with Cyrillic letters, making them undecipherable for any non-Russian speaker.

091

Baker, F. (2002). The Red Army Graffiti in the Reichstag, Berlin: Politics of Rock-Art in a Contemporary European Urban Landscape. In G. Nash & C. Chippindale (Eds.), *European Landscapes of Rock-Art* (pp. 20-38). London: Routledge. p. 32.

092
152



Left: Foster's 'censorship' or pictorial orchestration of Reichstag graffiti? East corridor, south end. Right: Norman Foster inspects the south-west stairwell of the Reichstag.

Left: A member of the preservation crew carefully restores the metallic doors in Room III. Right: Partially uncovered inscriptions in Room IV.

093
K08



153

Foster, N. (2003). The Living Museum / Das Lebendige Museum. In N. Foster, F. Baker, & D. Lipstadt (Ed.), *The Reichstag Graffiti / Die Reichstag-Graffiti* (D. Jenkins Ed.) (pp. 10-13). Berlin: Jovis. p. 11.

During one of my research visits in K4 (January 2015), a young couple of tourists entered the space. From the few phrases I managed to catch while they were entering Room II, they were Germans. This made me wonder if they would be able to understand what is written on the walls, and this immediately brought to my mind the Reichstag graffiti in Berlin. I thought that, if they are attentive enough they might be able to identify the portrait of Benito Mussolini in Room V which is covered by bullet holes **[088]**. Would they be able, however, to imagine how these bullet holes got there? As these were produced after the liberation of Athens – when EAM has settled its headquarters in K4 – one is left wondering whether it was the same young boy who once pointed the wooden figure of Mussolini that later gun fired Mussolini's scribed portrait **[089]**.

Apart from this and some other figurative inscriptions, however, the tourists would probably find it equally difficult to decipher the Greek writings of the K4 basements as much as the Reichstag's graffiti which are written in Russian, with Cyrillic letters. For archaeologist Frederick Baker, who has thoroughly studied the graffiti of the Reichstag, it is this chaotic accumulation of foreign for the viewer characters and words that turn the writings into an image resembling an abstract expressionist painting.[151]

Of course, the K4 building in Athens and the Reichstag in Berlin are very different. Yet, when examined together they can shed light on how inscriptions are treated and memory is managed in different contexts. Writing on the Reichstag symbolises the triumph of the Soviets against the Nazis – as these inscriptions took place after the victory of the Red Army in WWII – whereas the inscriptions on K4 walls demonstrate the defeat of the Greeks by the Nazis, given that were produced during the Occupation. Further, in terms of scale and status, the Reichstag is a monumental edifice that houses the German Parliament while the K4 building is much more modest in scale and form, and never enjoyed such a symbolic position **[090]**.

In both cases graffiti are preserved and restored but in a completely different way. The approach and attitudes towards the inscriptions reveal particular agendas and makes one raise questions concerning their use: are they treated to reconstruct history or construct history anew, and what is the role of the specificity of the narratives on walls? In the Reichstag, celebrated British architect Sir Norman Foster – who leads the project – 'censors' the vulgar and/or aggressive writings during the restoration and, as a consequence, most of the remaining marks are Red Army soldiers' 'signatures' **[091]**. These "visual brakes against hubris" contribute to what seems to be a pictorial orchestration of the inscriptions, an aesthetic process of framing, often resulting to funny shapes and outlines on the walls **[092]**.[152] It is commendable, to say the least, that Nikos Minos and his conservation crew did not follow a similar approach in K4; they do not attempt to direct our reading of the inscriptions and it seems that the main purpose of the restoration process was to transform the basements into habitable spaces **[093]**. In K4, the graffiti are neither contrived nor censored but simply uncovered, thus allowing the visitor to visually and mentally reconstruct their hidden narratives and histories. Contrary, in the Reichstag one confronts an arguably visually compelling composition of inscriptions. One no longer faces history but carefully selected fragments of it; it seems that the writings are prepared and framed in such a way to ensure the aesthetic joy of the spectator and to facilitate the visual consumption of the inscriptions. Norman Foster's vision of the Reichstag graffiti project is to become "a 'living museum' of German history".[153] But how 'living' can a space be when it is not publicly accessible, as is the case

with the Reichstag's basements? In her study of Reichstag's graffiti, Ella Chmielewska observes that the book – published after the conservation works of the inscriptions – is the sole place through which one can actually access them.[154] Also, she argues, the book is "the only place where the German speaking viewers can decipher the Cyrillic letters".[155] Flipping through the book, one feels as if the main purpose of Foster's Reichstag graffiti composition is to fill this catalogue's pages. Despite the existence of interesting essays followed by beautifully crafted drawings and carefully taken photographs, the book doesn't draw any linkages between the graffiti inside the Reichstag and those outside of it. In so doing, the catalogue further isolates the inscriptions and makes them work only as parts of Foster's 'living museum' synthesis.

Museologists André Desvallées and François Mairesse define musealisation as the operation of "placing [an object] in the museum, or more generally, transforming a centre of life into a sort of museum".[156] So again, how 'living' can be an object when it is museumified, when it is converted into a 'fossil' of its former being? Desvallées and Mairesse inform us that the musealisation procedure begins with "a phase of separation or suspension: objects or things are separated from their original context to be studied as documents representing the reality to which they formerly belonged".[157] Even though the graffito is not separated from its physical context or transferred to another – as it remains on the very same surface upon which it was written – it still becomes a representation of itself and is transformed into a museum object, a 'document' of its past reality. By changing their site of display, graffiti become something else: substitutes of themselves.

Fortunately, K4 does not claim nor attempts to be a museum. It is a 'space of memory'. This mere fact makes the fate of the surviving inscriptions completely different. Contrary to the 'museum condition', memory is 'living' by definition as it comes into being the very moment of its actualisation. In a sense, K4 inscriptions are traces that enable such an actualisation. Yet, since we've never witnessed what happened there, we cannot recall an actual individual memory. What we experience then is a constructed 'historical memory', and that is always collective. We are only able to recognise and identify with traces of events that we never experienced because we are members of a social group that shares a specific knowledge. One needs to be able to 'read' the traces of memory in order to actualise them. Otherwise, as Stavros Stavrides argues in his study of the relationship of space and time with collective memory, what one sees are incomprehensible marks. For Stavrides, spaces are "capacitors" of memory; they operate as "music scores" expecting to be performed by different individuals who share a common knowledge, a music language: "the music score, in order to be recognised as such and not as a sum of incomprehensible marks and symbols, one has to know how to read it".[158] In other words, memory is performative and thus always exposed to history. The K4 space, in a sense, problematises the function of memory and its relation to history; its inscriptions are notes on a music score awaiting different executions.

Chmielewska, E. (2008). The Wall as Witness-Surface or, the Reichstag Graffiti and Paradoxes of Writing over History. *lo Squaderno, 8,* 24-29. p. 25.

154

155

Of course, the current research provides a similar entry point, if not the only one, for non-Greek speaking viewers of the K4 inscriptions.

156

Desvallées, A., & Mairesse, F. (2010). *Key Concepts of Museology* (S. Nash, Trans.). Paris: Armand Colin. p. 50.

157

Desvallées, A., & Mairesse, F. (2010). *Key Concepts of Museology* (S. Nash, Trans.). Paris: Armand Colin. p. 51.

158

Stavrides, S. (2006). The Relationship of Space and Time in Collective Memory. In S. Stavrides (Ed.), *Memory and Experience of Space* (pp. 14-41). Athens: Alexandreia. [in Greek]. p. 28.

1.2.11. Facing History, Performing Memory: The Agency of Space on the Scene of Encounter[159]

Apart from a few exceptions, there are no actual records of how life was in K4's basements during its operation as a detention centre.[160] Due to the shortage of 'voluntary' testimonies referring to that space, one has to rely on the 'involuntary' inscriptions and his/her own experiences to interpret the history s/he encounters. Yet, as is the case with every music execution, the performance and its perception are affected by the situation in which it takes place. In other words, the space itself plays its own unique role in the moment when we confront the history in K4 and affects how we energise memory. The way we perform memory depends on our familiarity with its history and is affected by its spatial situation.

In its current state, the Space of Historical Memory is a very quiet place. The silence is broken only occasionally due to a few creaks that come from the rusted metal doors when opened, or the indolent steps of the visitors. Yet, when it operated as detention centre, the sonic environment should have been noisy: the echo produced by the muscular guards steps together with the wide shut doors would made the condition unearthly and disorientating. Apart from the terrifying soundscape, the humidity of the space – which still becomes unbearable after a while – adds yet another piece in the puzzle of the detainees' experience. While the current artificial light makes the spaces luminous and relatively comfortable the rooms during the occupation should have been quite dark thus making the gesture of writing a rather haptic act. The bold message 'Switch off the light' written on the toilet door in Room VI evinces how annoying the light could have been for the inmates **[094]**. Further, now the basement rooms of K4 are empty, thus ensuring a relatively comfortable experience for the visitors. Yet, as the dates and number of writings evince, when K4 operated as a detention centre, the rooms were quite crowded.[161] The prisoners are trying to find some space to sit and rest on the floor - that's why they ask, through their written messages, their fellow inmates to keep the rooms in the most human condition possible, while warning: 'Do not spit on the floor' **[095]**. On the top of these, the low height of the ceilings (2.20m) and the dark colour painted walls – an arguably common characteristic of detention spaces – make the atmosphere suffocating.

The crude marks on the smoky walls of the K4 dungeons – which seem as if they were drawn by Art Brut artists that Jean Dubuffet would envy – evince what happened there. As historian Anna Maria Droumpouki describes it,[162] while the historical Asty cinema continues to operate normally during the Occupation to entertain the Nazis, in the spaces next door another real-life, three year long, drama is being played. These 'wet dark graves', as inmate Georgios Karousos calls them in his inscription **[096]**, become the temporal home for insurgents and others who are prosecuted for petty, or even ridiculous, crimes (bread thieves, etc.) **[097]**. But what makes these personal scrawls so powerful and evocative? Is it only the historical agency they mediate or does space play a significant role in the way we perceive them?

Material culture scholar Rafael Schacter bases his examination of the reactions that contemporary street art invites[163] on anthropologist Alfred Gell who, in his seminal book *Art and Agency*, introduces a theory of the agency of artworks which is of interest here because it does not make a clear distinction between persons, objects and space.[164] Gell uses a specific terminology to describe how artworks can be seen as the mediators, or "indexes", of agency. Gell's concept of

159 This section presents a revised version of the line of thought I developed previously in Avramidis, K. (2014b). The Agency of Space on the Scene of Encounter: Thoughts on the Situational Nature of Perception. In K. Drakopoulou & A. Fakis (Eds.), *Meta* (pp. 47-54). Athens: Futura.

160 The only actual testimonies related to K4 are Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students*. Athens: Entos. [in Greek]; and Moraitis, D. (2011). *Testimony of Dimitris Moraitis on the Period 1941-1944*. Available at: http://korai4.gr/archive/testimonies/. Accessed: 29 October 2016. [in Greek].



'Switch off the light' emphatically written in Room VI-B82.

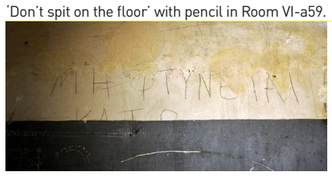
094 K08

Dimitris Moraitis, who was held in the K4 basements, affirms in his interview that he witnessed quite busy rooms once was taken there. Foivos Tsekeris, in his own extended narration of the experience he had in K4, makes the same assertion: the spaces were packed with people, ranging from 60 to 150 per room. For more details see Moraitis, D. (2011). *Testimony of Dimitris Moraitis on the Period 1941-1944*. [in Greek]; Tsekeris, F. (2007). *Polytechnic Here in the Years of the Occupation: From the Struggles with the Students*. Athens: Entos. [in Greek], p. 102.

161

095 K08

'Don't spit on the floor' with pencil in Room VI-a59.



162



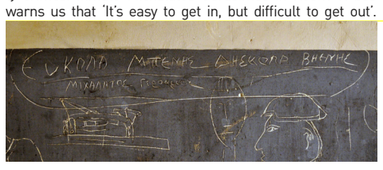
'Georgios Karousos. Entry 8-4-44. Accused for stealing tires and bicycles of the Axis forces. Arrested by the Tsoliades [Greek collaborationist military groups]. Ah Vah. And I'm spending my Easter in these bars, in this wet grave. Resident of Metaxourgiou District. 47 Deligiorgi Street. Ah Vah. Karousos' in Room V-B83.

Droumpouki, A. M. (2009). Korai 4, a Prison in the Centre of the City. In F. Kafka, *In the Penal Colony* (S. Stroumpos, Trans., Ed.) (pp. 59-70). Athens: Nefeli. [in Greek], p. 59.

096 K08

Detention happens with the slightest pretext and for petty crimes. Inmate Michalatos Gerasimos in Room VI-B63 warns us that 'It's easy to get in, but difficult to get out'.

097 K08



163 Schacter, R. (2008). An Ethnography of Iconoclash: An Investigation into the Production, Consumption and Destruction of Street-art in London. *Journal of Material Culture, 13*(1), 35-61.

164 I do not imply here, however, that the writings at K4's basements of K4 should be seen as artworks.

agency is inherently relational because in any 'transactional' situation there is an "agent" who is exercising agency and, at the receiving end of it, there is a "patient" that experiences this agency. An instance of agency is the moment when a relation between image and spectator is established. Gell argues that social agency can be exercised "relative to things" or "by things"; it can be "invested in things" or "emanate from things".[165] Thus, 'things' are simultaneously mirrors that reflect agency and screens upon which agency is projected; material objects 'speak' on behalf of their producers and index their intentions. The receiver, on the other end, energises the agency by recognizing the ascribed intentions of the agent.

Gell believes that when we confront an artefact we tend to mentally seek the source of its production so as to attribute it to the potential maker, because, as he argues, it "invites the question 'how did this thing get to be here?'".[166] Since our natural vantage point is that of the originating person, "[we] imagine the origination of a painting from the vicariously entertained standpoint of the painter".[167] In other words, we do not just view the writings on the walls but we experience them physically, corporeally and mentally. By placing ourselves in the standpoint of the producer, we embody the physical and circumstantial constraints of the historical moment of the execution.

The writings index the agency of their makers. Yet, the environment in which an inscription is placed has an agency of its own that acts on the object and significantly changes its perception. The material and immaterial characteristics of the environment in which a graffito is written and perceived are of primary importance in its meaning making. Meaning does not exist by itself; it happens. Also, it is subjective, plural and circumstantial. It is constructed the very moment one encounters a 'thing'. The situation of production and the scene of perception are by definition different; the writing is (nearly) never experienced during its execution. Thus, the scene of encounter, the 'meta-scene' of its production, is of even greater importance in the way we perceive it.

A writing on a surface does not exist in isolation; it is influenced by the entire visual environ that hosts it. For example, a work in a gallery usually coexists with other pieces of the same or similar artists. Contrary, a graffito on a K4 surface develops a dialogue with all the other writings of its surrounding - the individual voices become one collective voice against cruelty and war. However, it is not only the visual aspect that is important. Perhaps the most significant element in the perception of the writings is what I am inclined to term 'sensorial horizon', by which I mean the entirety of the sensorial stimuli produced to an active moving body in a particular situation. This horizon is never closed or unique but always in the making. The sensorial horizon of the K4, due to its unique location and semi-public character, consists of a combination of features that one would expect to find in the street as well as in a gallery: unearthly silence, uncomfortable temperature, stable artificial light, humidity, and homogenous depressive, dark colour background of the surfaces. All these characteristics, along with the agency of the writings, are fused at the moment of encounter and affect perception.

Perception is always situational and meaning making is contextually unique. Even though every inscription indexes the agency of its maker and has an agency of its own, its experience is largely dictated by the context in which it is encountered. In other words, we might have to shift our focus from the mere content or aesthetics of the writing to the material surface in or on which the agency is manifest as well as to the space it occupies. At the moment of encounter, situation does matter.

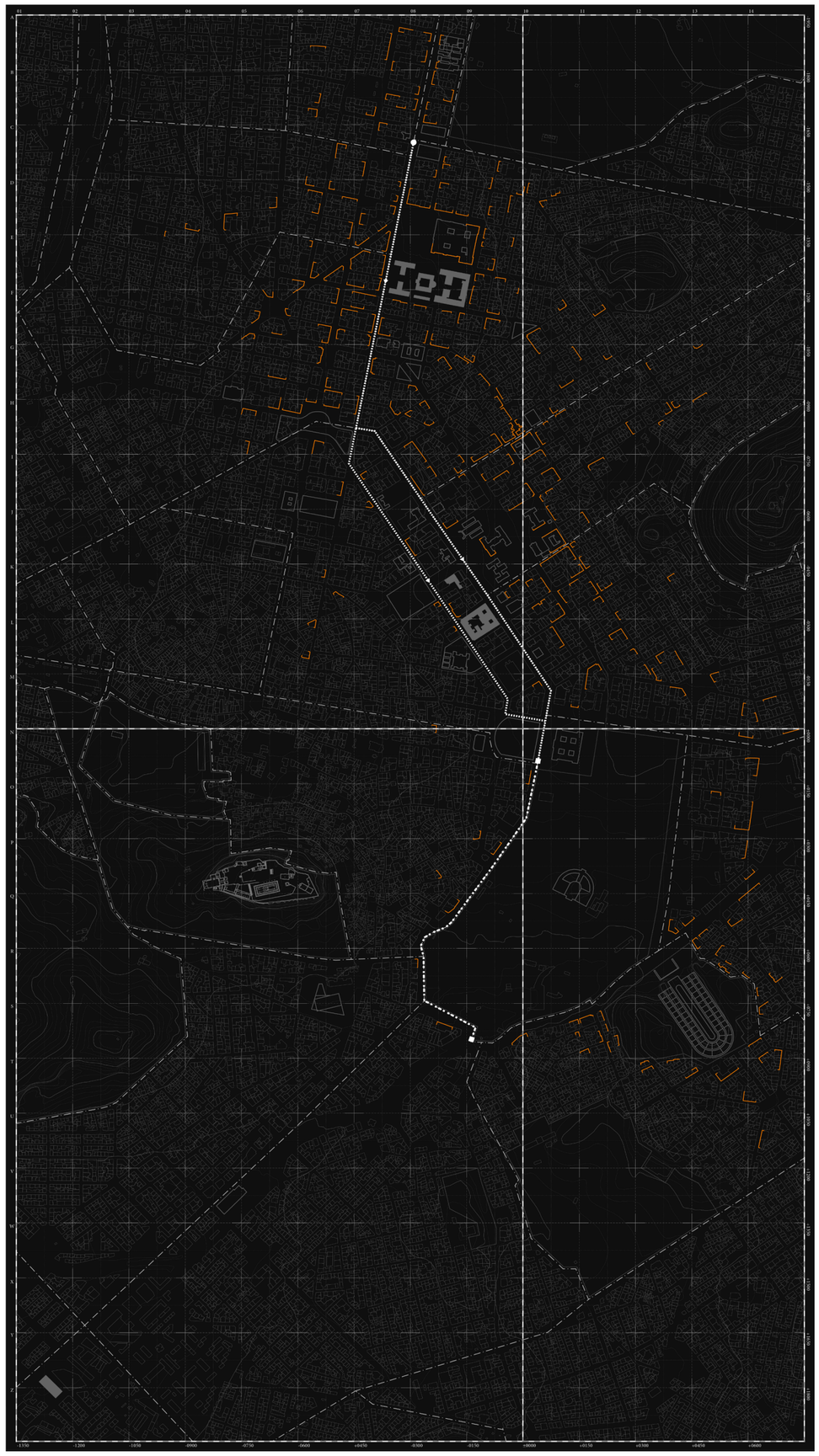
165 Gell, A. (1998). *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.18.

166 Gell, A. (1998). *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.67.

167 Gell, A. (1998). *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p.68.

Ultimately, the walls of K4 act as both diaries – where biographical notes and personal stories are inscribed – and guest books – where 'guests' write when they check in and out and narrate their experiences. In contrast to the absolute absence of traces of existence by the occupiers, these hieroglyphics represent the desperate attempts of the inmates to mark their presences; a single line hastily inscribed on the dark surface stands as a sign of a whole human existence. The urgency of absence of graffiti in this underground world of graffiti is more significant than the graffiti themselves.


ΑΜΑΖΑΝ
ΑΛΛΕΑΝΣ
ΟΙ ΝΙΚΗΤΑΙ
ΜΑΣΙΣ
ΣΑΣ
ΝΥΧΤΑ 15



2.1. Setting The Scene: Writing In Junta

This second chapter opens with an iconic image from the 1973 Uprising. It depicts the gate of the Athens Polytechnic a day after it was rammed by a tank of the Dictatorship resulting to the bloodstained finale of the uprising. The barely standing marble clad of the gate is covered with letters of different magnitudes and temporalities which are mixed with each other weaving a new text. The surface appears to be severely damaged from these multiple inscriptions and their continuous removal, while the characters of the words seem to emerge from the remnants of the previous writing layers. In other words, the gate gives the sense of a palimpsest where the equally violent gestures of writing and erasure meet on the surface. It is not the graphic simplicity of the individual letters or words that is important, however, but rather their coexistence and the relationship they forge with one another. Whether faded or partially eradicated, the underlying scripts are rewritten by the subsequent ones in a perpetual (re)creation of the palimpsestic text.

2.1.1. 'The Wall had a History of its Own': The Role of Graffiti in Dictatorial Athens[168]

The street had a history of its own,
Someone wrote it with paint on the wall,
It was just a single word, Freedom
Later it was argued that it was written by some kids.[169]

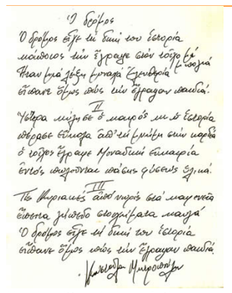
The opening quote of this section is an extract from the song *O Dromos [The Street]* written by Kostoula Mitropoulou and set to music by Manos Loizos in 1974, just after the end of the 7 year-long Military Junta in Greece (1967–1974). The 'Regime of the Colonels', as it is often called, is established after a successful coup d'etat that takes place on 21 April 1967.[170] Once the Junta gains complete control, it imposes the military rule and bans political parties from the parliament, forcing several leading politicians to leave 'voluntarily' the country. In the following months, lots of alleged dissidents – primarily artists and left-wing sympathisers – are arrested, imprisoned, tortured and sent to exile in desolate Greek islands.

This ballad is very popular and still enjoys a very special place in the Greek collective consciousness as it is considered to be a point of reference for a whole generation. Yet, it is not this aspect that makes it unique or of interest in the current discussion. This song shows how Greek society perceives its walls and the practice of wall writing in a specific historical instance. The lyrics of *The Street,* despite its title, primarily focus on walls, thus underlining the reciprocal relationship they share with streets. For Loizos and Mitropoulou, the street is a synonym of freedom and the wall is a space where it is practiced. Given the popularity of the song and its established position in the Greek collective memory, it might be argued that it provides a wider historical context for the practice of wall writing in Athens.

168 Parts of this section have been previously published in Avramidis, K. (2015). Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens. *The Design Journal, 18*(4), 513-534.

169 The translation of the song 'O Dromos' from Greek to English is by the author, based on the translation available in the article Varoufakis, Y., & Vitalspace.org. (2013). Athens: Birthplace of our Globalizing Wall. *Witte de With Review*. Available at: http://wdwreview.org/desks/birthplace-of-our-globalizing-wall/. Accessed: 22 January 2015.

170 This euphemism owes its name to the group of army officials – namely Brigadier General Stylianos Pattakos, Colonel George Papadopoulos and Colonel Nikolaos Makarezos – who led the coup and forcefully seized power.



Hand-written lyrics of the song 'The Street' ['O Dromos'] (1974) by Kostoula Mitropoulou.

O Dromos poetically highlights the significance of walls as resistance spaces and provides unique insights into the physiognomy of the post-dictatorial everyday life [098]. The wall is a canvas on which hope is inscribed and through which rebels encourage peers and communicate with a wider audience. The ballad not only shows how significant and popular the practice of wall writing was in Greece but also instils this significance in the collective consciousness. Even more importantly, in its few condensed lyrics, the song captures a very particular and sensitive moment of socio-political transition in Greece that is manifest in its rapidly changing visual landscape.

Then time passed and history moved on
[The word freedom] easily moved from memory to heart
Now the wall reads "unique bargains"
"Inside the shop you can find all kinds of stuff".

As the second verse of the song evinces, once life got back to normal after the end of the Junta, the Athenian urban landscape experiences a considerable visual transformation, the extent of which draws the attention of the composer. In post-dictatorial Athens, walls cease to be the sole venues of free expression against the censorship, oppression and injustice of the Junta and become advertisement surfaces that praise commerce and capital. The word 'freedom' is replaced by 'bargains'; the words on the wall, the handwritten instances of individual self-expression that ignited inspiration and admiration to their onlookers, now give their place to mechanically produced typographic elements and vacuous spectacular phrases. From a place of resistance, the wall is now transformed into a space of opportunity for profit; it is commodified, neutralised and disregarded.

The political roots of urban writing in Athens can be traced back to the Axis Occupation (1941-1944), later to the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) and relatively more recently to the Dictatorship (1967-1974). Yet, from 1974 until 2008, the practice of wall writing in Athens changes significantly. During this period, wall writers adopt a new writing instrument, i.e. spray instead of brush paint. The political slogans are largely replaced by a new writing genre, the primary content of which is concerned with the expression of passionate support for a football club. The third and final verse of the song refers to this transformation:

Every Sunday from early morning in the cafes
and then to the football match, slogans and brawling
The street had a history of its own,
Later it was argued that it was written by some kids.

Since the late 1980s, however, signature graffiti – the content of which is the name of the individual writer – massively prevails in the Athenian visual landscape, until the beginning of the crisis. It is then that wall writing in Athens becomes once again political in content and politicized in purpose. It seems that Athenian walls, in terms of use, have just completed a historical full circle:[171] from spaces of resistance they became spaces of spectacle; today that the spectacle of consumerism and false prosperity is over, their importance as civil claim raising venues re-emerges.

A similar point is raised in Varoufakis, Y., & Vitalspace.org. (2013). Athens: Birthplace of our Globalizing Wall. *Witte de With Review*. Available at: http://wdwreview.org/desks/birthplace-of-our-globalizing-wall/. Accessed: 22 January 2015.

Contemporary wall writers, their targets and the urban circumstances under which they act, differ considerably compared to their past counterparts. Today, politicized writing is primarily practiced by individuals who subscribe to anti-authoritarian ideologies, without necessarily being affiliated with political organizations, while during the Axis Occupation – as we've seen in the previous chapter – it used to be exercised by resistance groups that had direct affiliation with a specific party. Further, during the Junta, slogan writers are at much more risk to get caught and harshly penalized compared to contemporary practitioners. Also, it is not only the writings that change but also the entire urban visual landscape which consists of various signs that interact and compete with each other. Although the buildings, which are an integral part of any urban visual landscape, might not have significantly changed, several other less permanent elements have changed. What has also changed is the way that visual elements and/or visual communication practices of the past are understood in the present. Given that each graffito is a combination of a graphic gesture and a language thus dependent upon the surface it occupies and the situation of its creation, in order to appreciate the function and impact of the individual mark one has to examine how it relates to its specific material and linguistic conditions, and the ways it emerges from its local protest history.

2.1.2. 'It was Just a Single Word': An Idealistic Language for a Clinical Discourse

Upon its establishment, the Junta invents and gradually introduces in the public discourse a whole new vocabulary. This 'glossary' consists of newly coined or existing words and phrases that are combined and re-contextualised to acquire new meanings. For example, the colonels enjoy calling the coup a 'Nation-saving Revolution' – aiming to prevent the country's takeover from the communists – and repeatedly use the slogan 'Greece for Christian Greeks' to highlight the principles upon which their 'revolution' is based [099].

Apart from the constant anti-communist rhetoric, the colonels show particular preference to medical metaphors which are routinely used throughout their 7 year-long rule. Perhaps the most well-known is the one that Junta's frontman Colonel Papadopoulos used in his inaugural speech when he described Greece as 'a patient' and later as 'patient in a cast'.[172] For the Regime the country supposedly needs to be 'tied on the surgical bed' to secure that the 'operation' will be successful and won't 'endanger' the survival of the 'patient'. Yet, to perform the 'operation' they need a clinical environment which the colonels attempt to establish both in language and urban setting.

Repressive measures are immediately imposed in the domain of language. The censorship during the Regime constitutes a widespread practice executed by a sophisticated mechanism that the Dictatorship sets, and is very careful with all sorts of artistic production, especially those that communicate messages through language. The lyrics of songs and the scripts of theatrical plays are censored forcing their creators to adopt or even invent an encoded language as a response.[173] Greek poets choose silence as their primary mode of resistance, rather than agreeing their creations to be censored by the Junta.

Greek literature and classics scholar Karen Van Dyck, in her study *Kassandra and the Censors* which traces the role of female Greek poets in response to the censorship under the dictatorship, argues that language and writing-related practices are key sites of contestation during the Junta. This is due to the privileged position that the language enjoys in the Greek history, being associated to – or even equated with – the origins of the nation.[174] Together with ancient remnants, the Greek language provides material evidence of continuity with particular 'glorious' pasts thus helping register a persuasive national rhetoric. The language is a foundational characteristic of the Greek national identity and as such has been the bone of contestation many times in Greek history. As Van Dyck suggests, the 'language question' – i.e. a controversy on whether *katharevousa* or *demotic* Greek language should be used – is indicative of the key role that language plays in Greek political life and national imagination.[175]

It is not an accident, then, that policies related to language are central during the Junta. Van Dyck informs us that "one of the regime's first legislative actions was to stipulate that *katharevousa* would thenceforth also be the language of state and education".[176] The establishment of *katharevousa* in all aspects of life is an attempt to 'clean' the language from *demotic* – thus eliminating any 'left-related' linguistic residues – and built national identity, consciousness and coherence based on the classical ideals.[177] Further, the Regime shows a particular discomfort towards the ambiguity of language and seeks to eliminate it: words should exactly correspond to things. This leads the Dictators, Van Dyck argues, to ridiculous press laws regarding the treatment of language, such as the mandate that each book's title matches exactly to its content.[178] Actions of this



099
E07

The Minister of Education talks to students in an auditorium of the Athens Polytechnic. The slogan on the blackboard reads in bold 'Greece of Christian Greeks'. ca 02.1973.

One characteristic example that managed to bypass the censoring eye of the Dictatorship is the song 'Zavarakatranemia' which was composed by Yannis Markopoulos and performed by Nikos Xylouris in 1968. This word means absolutely nothing, but is considered to be a combination of three distinct words 'zavara-katra-nemia' from which either syllables are omitted or mirrored. All together mean 'black banners are weaved' [lavara-mavra-anemisan]. The song 'Elsa I'm afraid of you' [Elsa se fovamai] – composed by Dionysis Savvopoulos in 1972 – with its seemingly innocent love lyrics also tricked the censors of the Regime. Yet, 'Elsa' – a Greek female name – refers to E[l]SA, i.e. the infamous Greek Military Police. For a detailed study of the censorship imposed on the arts during the Junta or other moments in Greek history, see Ziogas, G., Karampinis, L., Stavrakakis, G., & Christopoulos, D. (Eds.). (2008). *The Sides of Censorship in Greece [Opseis Logokrisias stin Ellada]*. Athens: Nefeli. [in Greek]. For the repercussion of the Dictatorship on the Greek visual arts scene see Ganiti, E. (2009). The Military Dictatorship of April 1967 in Greece and its Repercussion on the Greek Visual Arts Scene. In *4th Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus*, London: Hellenic Observatory, LSE.

172 For a detailed discussion of the metaphors used during the dictatorship see Mikedakis, E. (2001). Manipulating Language: Metaphors in the Political Discourse of Georgios Papadopoulos (1967-1973). In E. Close, M. Tsianikas & G. Frazis (Eds.), *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the [3rd] Annual Conference of Greek Studies* (pp. 76-86). Adelaide: Flinders University, Department of Languages – Modern Greek.

173 *Katharévousa* (puristic [language]) was a form of Modern Greek language, a mixture of archaistic and Modern Greek linguistic features. Etymologically, *katharevousa* derives from the present participle of the Ancient Greek *kathareuō* which means 'cleaning'. The word *katharevousa* implies a pure and unspoilt form of Greek language that evolved from ancient Greek without any external, foreign and/or 'barbaric' influences. Although it was an artificial language, it was thought to be original and authentic, a pure sign of Greek-ness. According to Triantafyllides's Greek dictionary, the aim of *katharevousa* was to distance itself both from ancient Greek language as much as from the vernacular Greek language of the time, also known as *demotic*. Demotic derives from the ancient Greek *demotikos* ('common'), from *demos* ('common people' but also 'municipality'). *Katharevousa* was used parallel to *demotic* and this led to the 'Greek language question', also known as bilingualism [*diglossia*]. *Katharevousa* was officially replaced by Standard Modern Greek in 1976, after the restoration of democracy. For a detailed analysis of the function of *katharevousa* and the rise of the 'Greek language question', see Babiniotis, G. (Ed.). (2011). *Greek Language Question: Contemporary Approaches*. Athens: Greek Parliament Foundation. [in Greek].

174 Van Dyck, K. (1998). *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p. 14

175

176 Van Dyck, K. (1998). *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p. 14.

177 *Katharevousa* was the official language of the constitution and laws since 1911 and was popular in the circles of the intellectuals. Also, it was considered to be associated with the right and the educated bourgeoisie. In contrast, *demotic* was associated to the left. For example, the Greek Communist Party has banned *katharevousa* and adapted *demotic* in 1927 in order to be more accessible to a wider public.

178 Van Dyck, K. (1998). *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p. 18.

kind emphatically demonstrate the Regime's "unease with semantic instability" and exemplify the widespread use of censorship.[179]

The opposition, however, identifies what is at stake behind the effort to archaise, homogenise and censor language, and seeks to counter it. In response to the attempted stabilisation of meaning and hegemonic expansionism of the nationalist-authoritarian ideology, the resistance parodies language through the means of, as Van Dyck for example mentions, typography or spelling.[180] The slogans are schematic, enigmatic and rarely apophthegmatic, expressing the disapproval of their producers against the state of affairs. Also, the opposition re-introduces idealistic concepts – which are ambiguous by nature – or give back to language its figural power, thus disrupting the fixation of its meanings.

People invent new or re-appropriate existing words to respond to dictatorship's repression. This 'vocabulary' is articulated – both graphically and discursively – and disseminated in various modes that bypass the censoring eye of the Junta, like graffiti and posters. It also takes place in detention spaces, as whoever does not comply with the ruling Colonels and their rhetoric is arrested and imprisoned. A variety of spaces 'welcome' those who are against the Regime, such as the Averof Prison – which was discussed in the previous chapter – that during the Dictatorship is transformed from a penal prison into a political one, hosting mainly leftists. Upon arrest, people are interrogated by the Special Interrogation Sections of the Military Police (EAT-ESA).[181] The most infamous interrogation centre of the Junta is at 18 Bouboulinas Street [100], opposite to the Athens Polytechnic. In its cells several eponymous[182] and anonymous citizens are imprisoned and tortured at its – notorious for its harshness – terrace.[183] A photograph capturing the metal door of a typical cell is revelatory of the widespread use of a particular set of words during the Junta [101]. The rusted door has the window open – a common practice to monitor the inmates – and is full of inscribed names and dates similar to the ones found on K4's walls. The number 114 is centrally written in bold and stands out. This, however, does not refer to an address nor is a randomly chosen number. Contrary, it is a highly symbolic number that marked the era prior to the Dictatorship.[184]

The commonly known as '114 generation' – i.e. a student movement claiming changes in education and society – used as its slogan the number of the last article of the Greek Constitution which entrusts its observance to the citizens who are encouraged to resist by all means in the occasion of its attempted abolition.[185] In early 1960s, this symbolically charged number accompanies heavy loaded words – such as democracy – and is repeatedly written on placards that are raised in marches [102] and on banners decorating central buildings, thus introducing and gradually establishing 114 as a new, merely textual, symbol – a kind of 'nickname' that stands for freedom [103]. Perhaps the most emphatic use of 114 is its writing on the national flag on the University building at the heart of Athens during a gathering on 5.9.1963 against the interim government [104]. Writing on the flag may seem to be an extreme act of disrespect towards the nation, but in this context it is more like a confirmation of the true value of the symbol rather than anything else. The mere fact that the writing appears on the most central university space in the city makes it even more emblematic. In terms of placement, the simple lines of the number occupy the centre of the cross of the flag connoting that the ideas that 114 represents should be central for the country. Or do the constitutional rights for which 114 stands are crucified on the flag that day, prophetically foreseeing the abolition of the Greek democracy by the Colonels a few

179 Van Dyck, K. (1998). *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p. 19.

180 Van Dyck, K. (1998). *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p. 21.



The interrogation centre at 18 Bouboulinas St. ca 1968.

181 The Greek Military Police [ESA] is the police arm of the Greek Army. It is established in 1951and gradually develops into the secret national intelligence organisation, gaining extensive power within the Army. This intelligence and the control of information are used by the Colonels to seize power. The headquarters of ESA was in Eleftherias Park at Vassilissis Sofias Avenue in Athens, where today the Eleftherios Venizelos Museum is housed. ESA's Special Interrogation Sections [EAT] are notorious for their sophisticated torturing techniques. EAT-ESA is disbanded in 1974, immediately after the fall of the Junta.

100 E09

182 Many artists have been held in the Bouboulinas building, including famous composer Mikis Theodorakis – who later writes songs about his experience – and renowned actress Kitty Arseni, who dedicates a book on her days as political prisoner in this notorious torturing centre. See Arseni, K. (2005/1975). *Bouboulinas 18*. Athens: Themelio. [in Greek].

183 The interrogation centre at 18 Bouboulinas St is probably the one with the worst reputation in terms of torturing in Athens. The building has been demolished and today in its place stands a multi-storey residential building. For an extensive study of the Bouboulinas detention centre and the tortures that happened there during the Dictatorship see Giourgos, K., Kampylis, T., & Becket, J. (2009). *The Terrace of Bouboulina: Suppression and Tortures in Greece '67-'69*. Athens: Potamos. [in Greek].

A door full of graffiti at the notorious detention centre at 18 Bouboulinas Street. Several names and dates appear together with a boldly written '114'. ca 1968.



101 E09

184 The 1967 coup is the most vivid – albeit dramatic – expression of the deep-seated national disunity between the left and the right which has its roots in the Greek occupation and the subsequent Civil War. However, the signs of the political crisis start becoming visible as early as 1962 when students are mobilised to demand unrestrained access to higher education and vocational consolidation. This mobilisation is quickly oppressed by the police – abolishing the constitutional right of the academic asylum – and is consequently transformed into something bigger: a fight for asylum and freedom of speech in the university spaces. In turn, the claim for freedom in the universities becomes a cry for freedom in the Greek society at large.

185 The number 114 refers to the last article of the Greek Constitution (today Article 120), according to which the "observance of the constitution is entrusted to the patriotism of the Greeks who shall have the right and the duty to resist by all possible means against anyone who attempts the violent abolition of the Constitution". '1-1-4' – as it is pronounced – enjoys a very special place in the political history of Greece because it has repeatedly been used as a slogan in protests during the troubled decade of the 1960s. This made the number gain almost mythological proportions in the collective memory of the Greek society and gradually became the synonym of freedom for a whole generation. Details at Greek Parliament (2008). *The Constitution of Greece*. Athens: Greek Parliament.



114 written on the Greek flag at the University building on 4.9.1963.

Top: Lambrakis Democratic Youth holding 114 placards during the July events in Panepistimiou Avenue on 3.9.1965. Bottom: People with 114 placards during the July Events protest in Syntagma Square on 15.7.1965.



Banner on a building at Omonoia Sq reading 'Democracy-114'. 2.11.1962.



102 H06

103 M10

104 J09

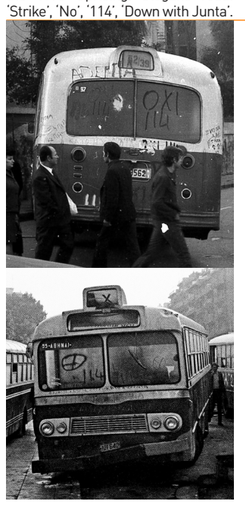
The funeral of Sotiris Petroulas at Stadiou Street. On the Greek flag is written '114'. 23.07.1965.



'The 'Royal Coup' – also known as the 'Apostasy' or the 'July events' – takes place on 15 July 1965 when King Constantine II forced elected PM Georgios Papandreou to resign and replaces him with renegade ('Apostates' in Greek) politicians from his own party. The incident is followed by mass protests for constitutional legitimacy and gory clashes with police that last for nearly two months. This anti-constitutional act marks the beginning a prolonged period of political instability in the country that ultimately leads in the 1967 military coup.

Buses are used as barricades outside the Athens Polytechnic during the 1973 Uprising. Slogans read: 'Strike', 'No', '114', 'Down with Junta'.

105 J08
106 E07



years later? Another instance that emblematises 114 is its use during the 1965 'July events' – i.e. the prelude of the Junta often also called 'Royal Coup'[186] – when, on 21.07.1965, 25 year-old student Sotiris Petroulas drops dead at Stadiou Street and his funeral two days later takes a character of demonstration against the state **[105]**. '114' is going to be used later at the Athens Polytechnic Uprising, appearing on walls and buses, being perhaps more timely than even before **[106]**.

Recurring slogans weave a network of seemingly unrelated surfaces in the city that come together due to their graffiti associations: an oppositional, discursively idealistic, textscape. 'A single word', such as 'freedom' or '114', is capable of disrupting the dominant rhetoric infusing it with ambiguity. It can refer to the Greek Independence's slogan 'freedom or death' or calling to arms against the Dictatorship. When words and ideas become texts, however, are subject to censorship. Then, the way they look and where are placed are equally important to what they say. Words invented by the opposition mock the clinical discourse imposed by the Junta. Texts, on the other hand, are graphically articulated in manner that is offensive to the equally clinical, authoritarian and ethnocentric urban environment.

2.1.3. 'A Nation-Saving [Graphic] Revolution': When Letters Offend Aesthetics

The metaphors that the Junta utilises are not limited to the domain of verbal rhetoric but have a direct visual impact to the city and its imagery. The slogan 'Calmness, Order and Security' of the Regime is imposed in the public sphere by means of militarisation of urban environments. This happens through periodical parades and festivals that celebrate the Junta as well as the introduction of nation symbols and the 'Hellenisation' of the visual culture.

Ephemeral structures, flags and insignias as well as all sorts of (ancient) Greek symbols dominate the Athenian visual landscape.[187] Every kind of memorabilia depicting colonel Papadopoulos are for sale in public display, reminding to the onlooker that the power of the Junta is singular and concentrated in the hands of one person; it is eponymous and has the face of the Dictator **[107]**. At the same time, the emblem of the Junta – which consists of the Phoenix coming out of flames at the back, an armed soldier figure in the front, and the date of the coup on the footer – adorns many buildings in central Athens **[108]**. The number '21' of the date of the coup is omnipresent, reminding when the country was 'reborn from its ashes'. This number also appears in the annual public spectacle known as the 'Festivals of the Military Virtue of the Greeks' which is organised by the Junta every August. In this event – which takes place in the Panathenaic Stadium – the military forces of the country demonstrate their skills in a venue fully decorated with all kinds of classical Greek symbols – such as meanders and harps, or ancient-like fonts – which attempts to make a visual reference and draw ideological links to the ancient Greek ideals **[109]**. This happening, together with other types of media propaganda, promotes the nationalistic and ethnocentric ideology of the Regime and establish a visual sphere that is worthy of the 'Greece for Christian Greeks'.

This conscious imitation of the classical antiquity aesthetics, however, is only a part of the 'Christian Greek' equation. Apart from the 'Greek-ness' – which is always visually associated to the classical past of the country – the Junta sets religion as another pillar of its ideology. It presents a distorted Greek orthodox religiousness with constant reference to Byzantine symbols, the extreme manifestation of which is evident in the revival of the 'Nation's Vow',[188] i.e. the construction of the 'Church of the Savior' in order to fulfil a vow supposedly dating back to the birth of the nation **[110]**.This emblematic architectural project demonstrates Junta's wish to control the belief system of the Greeks while underscoring the attempted ideological imposition through means of visual rhetoric. This 'Christian Greek-ness' seeks to construct a homogeneous – albeit artificial – collective identity that supposedly has deep roots in local history. Athens has to reflect this identity and needs to be 'cleaned' since cleanness is equated with health and truth. In the process, the white colour is employed due to its cathartic and sacred – kind of mythological and metaphysical – properties to purify and literally clean the visual environments of the country while suggesting a homogeneous image for the nation based on its eternal 'national colours'.[189]

Language and visual environment are constitutional components of power exercise for the Junta. That's why both are clinical, sterile and hygiene, fitting to the imaginary pure (Christian) and heroic (Greek) doctrine. The Regime creates an ordered, homogeneous universe of alleged 'Greek-ness' to secure its ideological governance. The opposition, however, diagnoses this effort and launches a sign war full of letters to dismantle Junta's monopoly in the linguistic and visual arenas. In this asymmetrical fight both sides use language to propagate messages, persuade

An interesting comparison regarding the public decoration strategies can be made between the Regime of the Colonels (1967-1974) and the 4th of August Regime (1936-1941). In both cases, the Regimes adopt highly visible tactics with decorations of important buildings with nationalistic aesthetics. For a detailed discussion of the public decoration of buildings and monuments in Athens during the 4th of August Regime, see Philippides, D. (2009). *Ephemeral and Eternal Athens*. Athens: Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation. [in Greek].

187



Portraits of the Dictator and the Greek King for sale in an Athenian kiosk on 23.08.1969.

107
H06

Banners celebrating the 2nd anniversary of the Junta on the Bank of Greece HQ read 'Long Live the 21st of April'.

108
L09



'Festivals of the Military Virtue of the Greeks' and other mass spectacles in the Panathenaic Stadium. Top: Celebrating the 1st anniversary of the Junta on 21.4.1968; Kleio Denardou sings 'Where is your shadow God' during the 2nd Junta Olympiad on 26.8.1969. Bottom: The date of the 'revolution' and several other national symbols enjoy special treatment in the festival happening on 30.8.1970.

109
R12

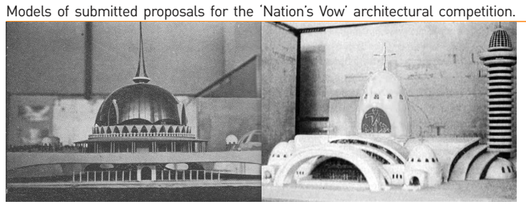


Anthropologist Dimitris Antoniou, in his close examination of the Nation's Vow and its relation to public history, argues that the Colonels, by reviving the interest in an unfulfilled national vow, sought to establish a link between their '1967 revolution' and the '1821 revolution' – that is the Greek War of Independence – in order to position themselves as authorised continuators of the nation fathers and, in so doing, "ensure their integration into national history". Unsurprisingly, many of the monumental in scale proposals that were submitted in the corresponding competition for the cathedral formalistically resembled examples of fascist architecture. See Antoniou, D. (2016). Unthinkable Histories: The Nation's Vow and the Making of the Past in Greece. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies, 34*(1), 131-160. p. 139.

188

Models of submitted proposals for the 'Nation's Vow' architectural competition.

110
J13



189

The 'traditional' white aesthetics of the insular Greek architecture is the direct visual result of a decree that was passed by the 4th of August Regime (1936) that made mandatory the whitewashing of all edifices for sanitation purposes. Of course, the practice of whitewashing buildings for these reasons was widespread since the ancient times. Yet, it is the 1967 Junta that officially bans colourfulness from the Aegean settlements. In this case, it is not a fight against epidemics but rather an attempt to aesthetically homogenise insular architecture and make it look more patriotic, more 'Greek', by the use of blue-white colours, the colours of the national flag. After all, Aegean architecture is historically multicoloured. The settlements are trying to adapt to their natural environments in order to achieve the best visual integration possible and become invisible for aspiring conquerors or pirates. For a detailed study on the 'whiteness' of the Aegean islands, see Dimitrokallis, G. (1995). The Whiteness of Traditional Settlements. *Yearbook of the Society of Cycladic Studies*, *12*, 385-390. [in Greek].

audiences and recruit allies. The discursive dimension of language, though, is the main weapon of those in power mainly due to their control of the media and the public ceremonies they organise (e.g., festivals). They are also in charge for orchestrating the visual rhetoric of the city, where a distorted sort of 'Greek-ness' is fanatically promoted. In contrast, there is a revolution in the domain of the graphic treatment of language on the side of those in opposition. This new graphic language – which is almost solely comprised by letters – invades the city in the form of posters and graffiti.

Palaeographer Armando Petrucci, in his study *Public Lettering* which traces its impact and social function from ancient to modern times, identifies similar implications in the graphic treatment of language in 1968 student revolution. Petrucci argues that the Parisian hand-painted creations are "almost totally devoid of figurative symbols and consist entirely of words—that is to say, of pure writing" and mentions Umberto Eco's remarks according to which these graphics introduce "a rough technique in red and black which offends at first glance".[190] The key word here is 'offend'. How can the writings be 'offensive' before even reading them? The mere gesture of writing on the walls breaks the rules of the Dictatorship and is already an act of resistance, offending the ruling class which uses sterile language in public – whether verbal or written – as a way to promote and celebrate itself. In so doing, the opposition asserts triumphantly its power on the visual and linguistic levels which are exclusive privileges of the Regime's authorities.

Contrary to the official sterile use of language and the ordered, clinical and ethnocentric aesthetics of the 'Calmness, Order and Security' doctrine, the opposition sets a stylistically violent and politically assaulting – in its blatant idealism – language. Most importantly, the graphic treatment of language by the opposition 'offends' the aesthetic taste of the bourgeoisie and those in power whose criteria have been built upon a distorted image of patriotism – seen as a poor adoption of ancient Greek models – awkwardly combined with a Byzantine touch. Here, however, lies a paradox that Petrucci identifies in the Italian student revolution too, namely that "these writings were the creation of university students who, although they may have professed radical and revolutionary ideologies, were socially and culturally members of the bourgeoisie".[191] As the Greek intelligentsia – large part of which consists of university students – is deprived from its right to speak freely in public as educated people about educated matters and is excluded from its traditional political weapon, i.e. writing, it shifts its focus from the content to the graphic appearance of language. The ugliness, messiness and crudeness of the writings, therefore, are not results of the lack of skill but an intentional strategy aiming to offend the official language through visual means and anti-conformist aesthetics.

The visual conquest of – especially education-related – institutional buildings and the introduction of a new style which repudiates the official aesthetics are two key components of the anti-dictatorial inscriptions. For example, despite the harsh repressive measures of the Regime, university students are mobilised against the Junta and occupy the Old Chemistry School and later the Law School a few meters farther. The sit-in of the Law School on 21.02.1973, the 'precursor' of the Polytechnic Uprising, is exemplar of the graffiti's functions during the Junta. The growing popular indignation is expressed by the students with the anti-slogan 'Greece of the Imprisoned Greeks' mocking the 'Greece of the Christian Greeks' motto of the Regime. The fact that students appear on the terrace of the building – and given the position of the edifice in the Athenian urban fabric – indicates their domination and maximises their physical visual reach [111]. The occupiers

190 Petrucci, A. (1993/1980). *Public Lettering: Script, Power, and Culture* (L. Lappin, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 119.

191 Petrucci, A. (1993/1980). *Public Lettering: Script, Power, and Culture* (L. Lappin, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 120.



111 The prelude of the Polytechnic Uprising. Students at the terrace of the occupied School of Law. Placards and slogan read: 'Freedom' and 'Solidarity to students'. 21.2.1973.

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Around that time, the Junta forced a number of left-sympathising students – who were granted a suspension from their mandatory military service to complete their studies – to join the army. The slogan 'Freedom to Students' probably refers to this enforcement action.

Students at the terrace of the School of Law holding placards that combined read: 'Freedom'. 21.2.1973

112
J10



Student graffiting the Athens Polytechnic during the 1973 Uprising. The semi-completed slogan reads 'Free[dom]'. 16.11.1973.

113
E07



The most iconic photograph of the 1973 Polytechnic Uprising. The graffiti on the wall reads 'Freedom'. 16.11.1973.

114
E07



demand 'Freedom to Students'[192] and their placards ask for 'Solidarity', while their raised fists and hands making the V sign declare their determination. Nine paper signs, each bearing a single letter, together read 'Freedom', highlighting the collective character of the concept and the need of particular positioning in this human chain to ensure its legibility and function in democracy [112]. The appearance of the letters is crude and bold contributing an 'antiaesthetic' graphic form to the visual environment and, in so doing, the students pose a threat to the Junta's spectacle and challenge its monopolistic treatment of language, both visually and discursively.

The political upheaval that commences in February 1973 culminates in the 3 day-long Polytechnic Uprising a few months later (14-17 November) which is destined to have a bloodshed finale for the students but also initiate an era of decline for the Regime that ends under the pressure of the Turkish invasion in Cyprus on 24 July the year after. The content and graphic articulations of graphisms remain the same in the Uprising: 'the word freedom written with paint on the wall' to remember the song *Dromos* [113]. A snapshot from its execution – capturing the agent from the back applying red colour paint with a brush on a stick on the Polytechnic wall – testifies the hurriedness and tension of the moment, while underscoring the performative role of wall writing and its anonymous character. The uprising produces emblematic graffiti-related photos, such as the one depicting a group of five students sitting on the grasses of the Polytechnic in front of slogan that reads 'FREEDOM' while hiding their faces from the camera [114]. In so doing, they avoid getting identified by the Junta while, at the same time, highlighting that freedom is faceless and that graffiti acquire their meaning not only from what they say but also – and perhaps more importantly – from where they appear, when they are executed and how they look like.



2.2. Athens Polytechnic: Palimpsestic Texts

In what follows in this section I try to map the different spatial, social and political dynamics that contributed to the 1973 Uprising which heralded the subsequent fall of the Greek Military Junta. The fact that the Uprising happens in the context of – or rather as the natural result of – the student movements of the 1960s and has as its epicentre educational facilities adds particular material symbolism to the spaces where it takes place. The unique history, emblematic role in the anti-dictatorial fight and special position in both Athenian urban fabric and Greek collective memory of the Athens Polytechnic (henceforth AP), makes it a privileged situation to discuss issues related to wall writing in the context of the Dictatorship. Further, the AP complex is the only site of this thesis whose surfaces host graffiti of all the historical periods under question here. This given, the AP occupies the centre of this dissertation so as to provide the bridge between the three distant temporalities and situations.

2.2.1. The Bright Polytechnic: Writing on the Iconic Educational Complex

The AP is a campus rather than a building and is indissolubly linked to the Greek modern history. The AP hosts the National Technical University (NTUA) which is the oldest (together with the National Kapodistrian University of Athens) and one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Greece.[193] It was founded in 1837 as a Royal School of Arts and was initially settled in the Georgiou Vlahoutsi's House at 38 Piraeus Street – designed by Stamatios Kleanthis, one of the most famous Greek architects of the time – before moving to the new, albeit still incomplete, campus at 38 Patission Street in 1872.[194] The construction of the new complex is sponsored by several benefactors aiming to create an institution that would educate engineers in order to meet the increasing demands of the newborn Greek state.[195] Architect Kostas Bires – who was amongst the very first students who graduated from the newly established School of Architecture of the NTUA – in his extensive research on the history of the AP complex reveals the high expectations of the benefactors regarding the new Polytechnic campus: they didn't envision it as a building that would just host the institution but they demanded it to become a "bright Polytechnic".[196]

The AP complex occupies a land of approximately 25.000sqm and is constructed in three stages. During the first stage (1862-1876), three buildings are erected: two identical single-storey, T-shape edifices of Doric architectural rhythm (School of Arts and Rectory) – positioned symmetrically opposite to each other (in North and South respectively) – leading to the imposing square shape with atrium and a semi-cylinder back, two storey School of Architecture building (Averof) that follows the principles of the Ionian architectural rhythm. All three are built with expensive stone and decorated with Pentelikon marble, which symbolises wealth and refers to classical Greece.[197] They are designed by Lysandros Kaftantzoglou (1811-1885), a genuine exponent of Classicism and one of the most creative Greek architect of the 19th century, who also designed several other celebrated public buildings in Athens (e.g., Arsakeio Girls' School).[198] The AP 'trilogy' – which is only a part of the architect's proposed campus – is among the most well

197 193 194 195 196 198

I use two acronyms for different purposes here. 'NTUA' refers to the Polytechnic as institution, while the 'AP' to its campus, as a physical site.

Bires, K. (1957). *The History of the National Technical University of Athens: Until the Foundation of the Higher Education Schools*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek]. pp. 49-50

In Greek, the NTUA is called National Metsovian Polytechnic. It owes this name to the birthplace city (Metsovo) of the benefactors Nikolaos Stournaris, Eleni Tositsa, Michail Tositsas and Georgios Averof, who generously financially supported the construction of its new campus at Patission Street. The Royal School of Arts was renamed to 'Metsovian' in 1873 upon the relevant request of the grand benefactor Georgios Averof. Further, Tositsa and Stournari Streets, two out of the four streets that surround the AP complex, bear the names of the corresponding benefactors. For more details see Bires, K. (1957). *The History of the National Technical University of Athens: Until the Foundation of the Higher Education Schools*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek]. p. 218.

Bires, K. (1957). *The History of the National Technical University of Athens: Until the Foundation of the Higher Education Schools*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek]. pp. 225.

Philippides, D. (1995). *The Life and Work of the Architect Lysandros Kaftantzoglou, 1811-1885*. Athens: Cultural Institution of Pireaus Group. [in Greek]. p. 282.

According to Philippides, the imposing semi-cylindrical element at the back of the Averof edifice was a development of Kaftantzoglou's similar 'Roman' experimentation in a previous building, namely at the Arsakeio Girls' School (today the Council of State) – which is the architect's first monumental design – built between 1846-1852 at 47 Panepistimiou Avenue. For more details on this see Philippides, D. (1995). *The Life and Work of the Architect Lysandros Kaftantzoglou, 1811-1885*. Athens: Cultural Institution of Pireaus Group. [in Greek]. pp. 286, 333.

known neoclassical complexes in Greece[199] and is also considered one of the most important architectural examples of the European Classicism [115].

Architectural historian Dimitres Philippides, in his monograph on the life and work of the architect, argues that the AP trilogy is Kaftantzoglou's "masterpiece".[200] But Philippides is not the only one who thinks so. Bires, despite being one of those who criticised the architecture of the AP, also agrees that this is the case. He believes that the single storey edifices in Kaftantzoglou's design are amongst the most beautiful classicistic buildings in Greece [116]. Kaftantzoglou is fuelled by an excessive idealism and felt personally responsible to deliver an educational campus that would not only meet the high standards of the benefactors but would also respond to the national demand for a prestigious School of Arts that "the cradle of the Arts" deserved.[201] It is this commitment to satisfy a whole nation that led the architect to focus primary on the appearance of the AP rather than its functionality.

The increasing spatial demands of the institution during the early 20th century, leads to the extension of the campus with the addition of another building at the South side of the plot, adjacent to Stournari Street. The second construction phase (1930-1935) results to the erection of a rectangular shape edifice (called 'Ginis building', in honour of Rector Aggelos Ginis) designed by Kostas Kitsikis (1892-1969), one of the most prolific Greek architects of the interwar period, and a genuine exponent of academicism and eclecticism, consistently attempting to mix classic with modern architecture [117]. As the needs of the post-war Polytechnic keep increasing, during the last construction stage of the AP campus (1950-1957), two more buildings are added completing the characteristic U-shape of the complex at the back as originally envisioned by Kaftantzoglou. These are designed by Emmanouil Kriezis (1880-1967) – the architect of the K4 – whose design approach is characterised by a combination of the modernist spirit with what he considers 'Greek' architectural elements [118].

Today, the AP hosts only the School of Architecture as the other departments of the Polytechnic moved to another campus outside the city centre. The complex is characterised by rigidity and introversion – since most of the openings look towards the interior yard – and along with the Archaeological Museum that is positioned next to it, dominate the first part of the, 5 kilometre-long, Patission Street. The AP never ceased being a space of resistance and politicization: before becoming a symbol of the anti-dictatorial struggle, played a crucial role during the WWII National Resistance.[202] During the Occupation, the rooms of the AP host several events aiming to cultivate resistance spirit and liberation morale. These events are organised by the students of the institution who are either members or closely affiliated to the resistance movements against the Axis forces.[203] Undoubtedly, however, the AP is inextricably linked and mainly remembered as the epicentre of the bloody events on 17 November 1973. The Polytechnic's gate, especially, enjoys enormous symbolic value due to the emblematic role it played in the history of student movements against totalitarianisms. Military tanks have rammed the gate three times: firstly, during the Axis Occupation (06.03.1942); secondly, during the December events (05.12.1944); thirdly, during the Polytechnic Uprising (17.11.1973).[204] The latter case is the only one caught on tape, the reproduction of which further monumentalises the image of the AP as a democratic stronghold [119]. Despite its undeniable aesthetic qualities, imposing scale and bright educational history, the AP is first and foremost a symbol of freedom in the Greek collective consciousness; a synonym of political struggle.

Bires, K. (1957). *The History of the National Technical University of Athens: Until the Foundation of the Higher Education Schools*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek]. p. 15.

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The Athens Polytechnic, after its brief settlement in Vlahoutsi's House, it moves in the brand new complex at Patision St in 1872.

115
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Philippides, D. (1995). *The Life and Work of the Architect Lysandros Kaftantzoglou, 1811-1885*. Athens: Cultural Institution of Pireaus Group. [in Greek]. p. 277.

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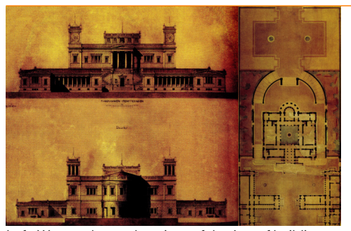
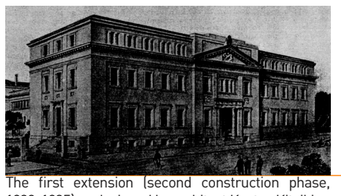
E07



Left: West and east elevations of the Averof building as originally designed by the architect in 1862. Right: The monumental classic layout of the Athens Polytechnic complex as originally conceived by Kaftantzoglou.

201

Bires, K. (1957). *The History of the National Technical University of Athens: Until the Foundation of the Higher Education Schools*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek]. p. 225.



The first extension (second construction phase, 1930-1935) as designed by architect Kostas Kitsikis.

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Left: Watercolour produced by Louisa Lantsa in 1885 showing the 'bright' Athens Polytechnic as it was implemented. Right: An aerial view of the Athens Polytechnic campus as is it stands today.

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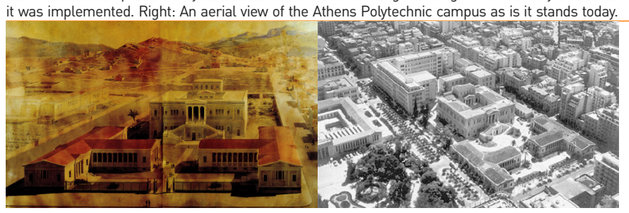
E07



202

The AP was a hub of resistance during the occupation. For more see Papa, E. (Ed.). (1985). *The National Technical University of Athens during the National Resistance, 1941-44.* Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek].

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NTUA students also participated in anti-occupation rallies and 18 of them lost their lives - a simple commemorative marble plaque, upon which the names of the students are engraved, has been placed in the courtyard of the AP to remind the ideals for which they were sacrificed. For more details on the active political role of the Polytechnic during the occupation see Argyriou, A. (1997). Resistance Centres. In G. Tsamasfyros & D. Mpasantis (Eds.), *National Technical University of Athens, 1837-1997: One Hundred and Sixty Years* (pp. 25-30). Athens: National Technical University of Athens. [in Greek].

Today, the crashed gate of the 1973 uprising is exhibited next to a memorial at the courtyard of the AP.

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Documenting the dramatic moments before the tank rams the Polytechnic gate on 17.11.1973.

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E07



2.2.2-01. AP Urban Context (1:2000)

Athens Polytechnic
Former Polytechnic
Key Sites [BoG; K4]
Key Buildings
Key Buildings [Demolished]
Key Buildings [Educational]
Square Initials
Locational Index
Zoom In
Protest Gathering Point
Demostration Route
Detention Route
Index Line
Conceptual Displacement
Physical Displacement

D08 Archaeological Museum
Athens Polytechnic
E07
E09 Special Interrogation Centre of Military Police [18 Bouboulinas St]
E08
EX
D16 Averof Prison

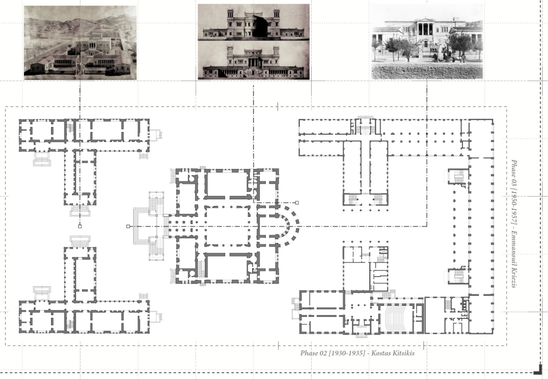
In the AP complex, Kaftantzoglou consciously continues the architectural type he has tested in the Arsakeio building (Philippides, 1995:333)

[Athens Polytechnic, Former 3rd Army Polytechnic] – 100m
[Athens Polytechnic School of Chemistry] – 55m
[Athens Polytechnic School of Law] – 140m
[Athens Polytechnic, Athens Trilogy] – 83m
[Athens Polytechnic, Greek Parliament] – 130m
Arsakeio heralds the "symmetrical monumentality" of the AP and sets the principles that Kaftantzoglou followed on the rhythm of the openings (Philippides, 1984:86).
Athens Polytechnic [38 Patision St] – Ground Floor Plan
Ionian and Pacific Mutual Insurance Co. Ltd. Building [Ionian Bank Building] – 70m
Athens Polytechnic, School of Law [Old Parliament Site] – 120m
Athens Polytechnic [38 Patision St] – Elevation
OM
H09 School of Chemistry
Athens City Hall
Athens Conservatory
I03
J08
State Council
J09
Athens Trilogy
PR
School of Law
J10
K08
KL
Space of Historical Memory
L08
L09
Bank of Greece
KO
Old Parliament
SY
M11
Greek Parliament
Military Police Headquarters [EAT-ESA]
L17

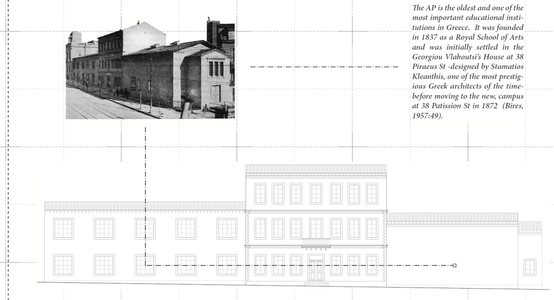
The AP is Kaftantzoglou's "masterpiece". The single storey edifices are considered amongst the most beautiful monumental classicistic buildings in Greece (Bires, 1957:225).

Kaftantzoglou had to deliver an educational campus responding to the national demand for a prestigious School of Arts that "the cradle of the Arts" deserved (Bires, 1957:225).

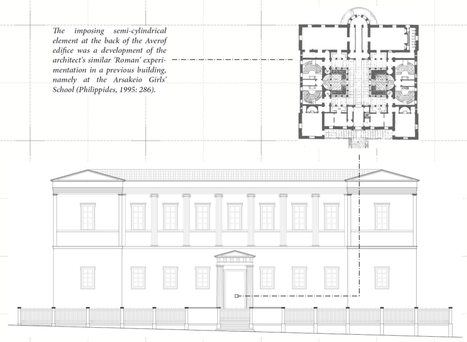
Benefactors didn't envision the AP as a complex that would just host the institution, but they demanded it to become a "bright Polytechnic" (Bires, 1957:225).



The AP is the oldest and one of the most important educational institutions in Greece. It was founded in 1837 as a Royal School of Arts and was initially settled in the Georgiou Vlahouti's House at 38 Piraeus St -designed by Stamatios Kleanthis, one of the most prestigious Greek architects of the time- before moving to the new, campus at 38 Patission St in 1872 (Bires, 1957:49).



The imposing semi-cylindrical element at the back of the Averof edifice was a development of the architect's similar 'Roman' experimentation in a previous building, namely at the Arsakeio Girls' School (Philippides, 1995: 286).



2.2.3. Exarcheia: Writing in a Radical District

When the AP complex started being erected in 1862 the surrounding area was completely uninhabited. Patission Street was not considered part of Athens city centre but rather its extension. It started from Panepistimiou Avenue, next to Omonoia Square, and ended at Patissia area, to which owes its name. Today, Patissia is a densely populated Athenian district but until the early 20th century it remains countryside. In the past, Patission Street was a famous promenade consisting of beautiful villas and a famous row of trees **[120]**. The current look of Patission Street hardly resembles that past image as it is one of the busiest and noisiest streets in central Athens.

The rapid increase of the population in Athens the next few decades made the expansion of the city a pressing need. The development of Athens was fast and by the completion of the AP trilogy in 1876, the urban fabric has already reached the neighbourhood of the institution **[121]**. Next to the AP is being erected – in a considerably slower pace – the imposing National Archaeological Museum (1866-1891), designed by the German architect Ludwig Lange (1808-1868) **[122]**. Apart from the Museum, along Patission Street several important historical buildings are concentrated, such as the Papaleonardos Apartment Building at 61 Patission Street (1925) – where the famous soprano Maria Kallas resided – designed by Kostas Kitsikis, the architect of the second stage of the AP complex. Another significant building on the street, in very close proximity to the AP, is the famous Acropole Palace Hotel at 51 Patission (1926-1928) , designed by Sotirios Magiasis (1894-1966) **[123]**, one of the most celebrated Art Nouveau buildings in Greece.[205]

In the early 20th century, as Athens keeps expanding, new districts start being created around Patission Street and the AP: Exarcheia, Kypseli, Pedion Areos, and so on. In her study of the history of Patission Street, architectural historian Maro Kardamitsi-Adami argues that this raised the need for new public and private schools.[206] Many of these educational facilities are concentrated along Patission Street paving the way for the emergence of an intellectual hub. In terms of value, both architecturally and educationally, the second most important university campus along the street – just half a kilometre away from the AP – is the Athens University of Economics and Business, which was built in 1935 and designed by the famous Greek architect Anastasios Metaxas **[124]**. In other words, Patission is gradually transformed to, and established in the Athenian consciousness as, the street of education.

This concentration of educational institutions in the district around the AP attracted intellectuals, scholars and students, that started moving into the area and who progressively cultivated politicisation and radicalisation of (especially) Exarcheia. The district played an active role in the national resistance against Occupation Army in WWII and 1944 December events.[207] The fact that the Police – controlled by the Axis Forces – had it headquarters opposite to the AP at Patission Street enhanced the anti-Occupation sentiments of the local inhabitants **[125]**. This is to say that Exarcheia has historically been seen as the synonym of resistance and revolt.[208] Even though today it has been transformed into an alternative entertainment centre, Exarcheia is still one of the most politically charged districts in Athens. Its turbulent past and contested present, cultivated a sense of neighbourhood in an 'independent state' in national imagination. Exarcheia is considered to be 'abaton' – meaning impassable for the police – as every operation in the district is understood as intrusion in a 'sacred' place. Since the 1970s, Exarcheia is notoriously known for its politicised inhabitants. Intellectuals and artists, students and activist as well as



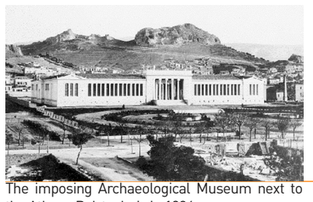
Patisson St and its famous row of trees. ca 1910.

120 G07



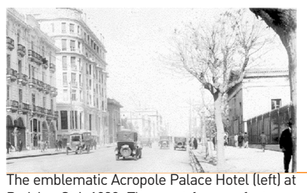
A map of 1875 Athens by Johann A. Kaupert showing the development of the city. On the north end dominates the newly completed Athens Polytechnic trilogy and the still under construction Archaeological Museum .

121



The imposing Archaeological Museum next to the Athens Polytechnic in 1906.

122 D08



The emblematic Acropole Palace Hotel (left) at Patision St in1930. The most famous footages of the 1973 Uprising are captured from here due to the its placement directly opposite to the Polytechnic (right).

123 E07

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This building has a particular historical important due to its vantage position. From its balconies many famous footages of the Polytechnic Uprising were taped. For more details see Holevas, N. (1999). The Acropole Palace. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 13-14. [in Greek].

206

Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (1999). Patision Street: Universities and Schools. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 15-18. [in Greek].

Patisson St accumulates several educational institutions contributing to its politicization. Here the Athens University of Economics and Business in 1935.



124 A08

During the 1944 December events, the Strefi Hill in Exarcheia was the fortress of ELAS members, while the Chemistry School at Solonos Street – also within the borders of the district – was the stronghold of the British Forces. This caused severe clashes at the area between the two sides and transformed Exarcheia into a crossfire area. From the terrace of the 'Blue Apartment Building' – a symbol of Greek modernist architecture, designed by Kyriakos Panagiotakos – which dominates the neighbourhood and still stands at the corner of the characteristic triangular Exarcheia square, one could observe the whole area thus making it a strategic point for the fighting sides. For a detailed study of the architecture and the historical importance of the building see Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2006b). *The Blue Apartment Building*. Athens: Libro. [in Greek].

207

The Police HQ next to the Athens Polytechnic damaged during the 1944 December Events. ca 01.1945.



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On 17 November 1985, during a mass and riotous protest for the anniversary of the 1973 Uprising, Michalis Kaltezas, a fifteen-year old boy, was shot dead by a policeman at the intersection of Stournari and Botatsi streets, next to the AP. This resulted to circle of urban turmoil and building occupations. In 6th December 2008, the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, another a fifteen-year old boy, by a policeman at the intersection of Messologiou and Tzavela streets in Exarcheia caused rioting throughout Greece and brought back to surface repressed memories of the past. Vaso Makrygianni and Haris Tsavdaroglou, in their spatial analysis of the December uprising, argue that the shooting of Alexandros Grigoropoulos at the intersection of the two most vivid pedestrian areas of the district on a Saturday night took place "in the 'hottest' area of the city, at the 'hottest' time of the week". The 2008 December Youth Uprising left a large legacy in terms of self organisation and empowered the antagonistic movement in the district, thus further cultivating the politicization and symbolism of Exarcheia in the Greek collective consciousness. Makrygianni, V. & Tsavdaroglou, H. (2011). Urban Planning and Revolt: A Spatial Analysis of the December 2008 Uprising in Athens. In A. Vradis, & D. Dalakoglou (Eds.), *Revolt and Crisis in Greece: Between a Present yet to Pass and a Future still to Come* (pp. 29-58). London: AK Press. p. 40.

radicalised political groups comprise its demographic map. Throughout the post-dictatorial era, Exarcheia has been the hub of and for artists and a place where several marginal subcultures, such as the punk movement, blossomed thus further cultivating the radical spirit of the district.

Today Exarcheia remains the stronghold of the anti-systemic movement and the epicentre of confrontations between police and radical groups. Apart from specific walls, buildings and roads that are prone to politicised urban writing in Athens, Exarcheia district should be considered to be the 'capital' of this genre as almost every inch of its walls is covered with graffiti. The pervasive presence of graffiti in this district has historical roots. Exarcheia's walls were full of graffiti during the national resistance in WWII[209] and continued hosting writings until the 1973 Polytechnic Uprising.[210] At present, the surfaces of the district remain full of all sorts of inscriptions, making graffiti synonym and inseparable part of the visual identity of Exarcheia.[211]

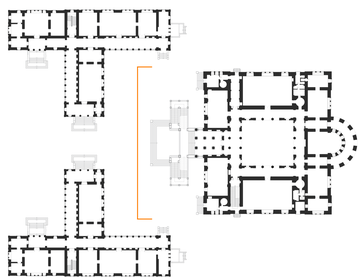
Graffiti, Exarcheia district and the AP have a very close relationship. The symbolism of AP and the history of Exarcheia affect the meaning of graffiti and, in turn, graffiti contribute to their identity. The only way to understand one graphism on the AP is to refer to past writings and predict the future ones. The walls of the AP are multi-vocal and multi-temporal; they are palimpsests. Each graffito on the AP – as is the case with every palimpsestic text – contaminates, infiltrates and inhabits the past and future ones constantly.

209 As evinced in the book Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. [in Greek].

210 The strong presence of graffiti in Exarcheia during the Junta can be evinced in photographic documents of the period. See for example Alatas, T. (Ed.). (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance*. Athens: Flippress. [in Greek]; Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. [in Greek]; Fatsis, Y. (1993). *Polytechnic '73: Uprising, Occupation, Invasion*. Athens: Kastaniotis. [in Greek]; Karapanou, A. (Ed.). (2014). *Seven Years of Darkness: The Dictatorship of the Colonels, 1967-1974*. Athens: Greek Parliament. [in Greek].

211 The writing scene in Exarcheia is very well documented, with several specialised publications dedicated to graffiti in the neighbourhood (e.g., Spyropoulos, 2013). The puzzle of graffiti documentation in Exarcheia district completes with a documentary worth mentioning here. The 'Exarcheia - Walls', produced by Thomas Kiaos and Natasa Segou for the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT), is one of the 14 episodes of the Micropolis documentary series that examined 14 Athenian districts in relation to an architectural concept (e.g., Exarcheia–Walls; Omonoia–Arcades; Kipseli–Basements, etc.). Each of these 14 "portraits" – as producers like to call them – explores a neighbourhood as a micro-city within Athens that is characterized by an architectural notion that is historically unique for the particular place. The mere fact that walls were chosen for Exarcheia emphatically underlines the importance and prominent position of wall writing in this specific urban context. For more details see Spyropoulos, T. (2013). *EX-ARCHEIA Uncensored: The Slogans and Graffiti of Exarcheia, 2009-2013* (D. Zakynthinou, Trans.). Athens: Rakosyllektis; Kiaos, T., & Segou, N. (2012). *Micropolis: Exarcheia-Walls*. Athens: Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT). Available at: https://vimeo.com/33824110. Accessed 20 July 2015.

2.2.4.-01_AP Physical Texts_West Elevation Cottage (1:100)






ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΠΟΛΥΤΕΧΝΕΙΟΝ
WE WILL STAND
IN SOLIDARITY
WITH THE
ISRAELI PEOPLE
AUTHORISED
WE DEMAND
STUDENTS DON'T NEED
THEY PARTICIPATE
IN OUR FATE
WANT YOU
DEATH TO REALISM
DOWN
WITH
JUNTA
DOWN WITH JUNTA
DEATH
TO
FASCISTS
DOWN
WITH
THE
JUNTA
USA=NAZI
NO TO THE MURDERS OF
A MADMAN
AMPHICRATCY
YES
SAY
RADIO
SAY
TIMOLAND
DEFEND
RATS TO
PASCISM
FREE
LIBERTY
FOR
ALL
GOOD
WILL
WINS
ALL
STUDENTS ARE
WITH YOU
WE WILL STAND
IN SOLIDARITY
WITH THE
ISRAELI PEOPLE
MARX OF
ANIMALS
MAGNANIMITY TO
BORGHESE
TO
STRANGE
FREEDOM
RATS TO
PASCISM
SOLIDER
DOWN WITH
THE DICTATOR
SOLIDER
SOLIDER
DOWN WITH
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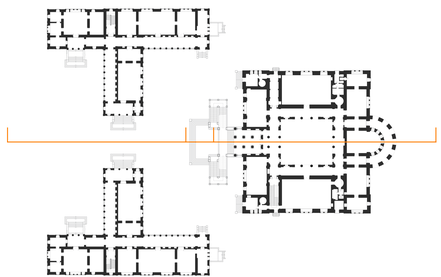
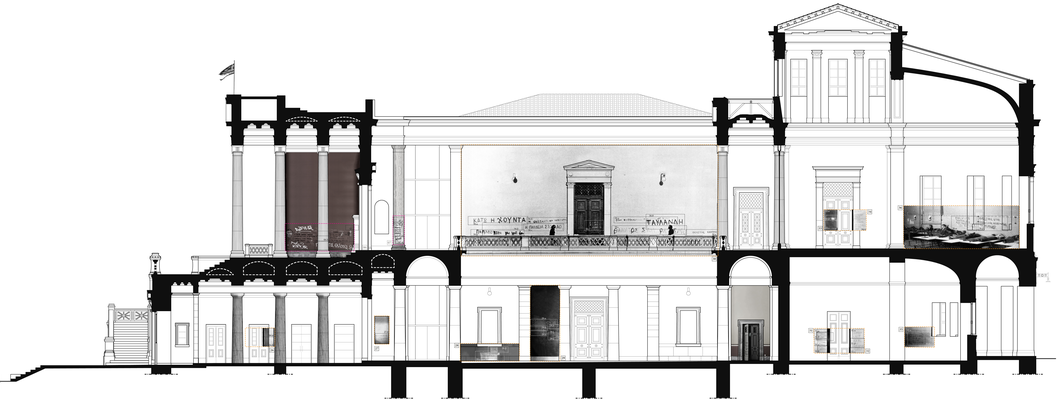
2.2 L-02_AP Physical Tests: North Elevation-Section Collage | 1:100







MICAH 6 : O THE TOWN OF FREEDOM
UNLESS YOU LEARN RESISTANCE YOU'
WOES WOULD LEAD YOU TO THE SCAFFOLD
FOR BRAVE ZEUS GIVES US "FREEDOM

FREE
VERSUS

LAOCRACY

PASSERBY
AROUND THE
WINDOWLAND

STATE-MOB

FREE

FREEDOM

GENERAL STORE
PASSERBYLAND
YOU ARE A TRAITOR

THE GAME
OF THE
THE ARMS

VIOLENCE
UPRISING
OF THE
CONSTRUCTION

FREE TALK
IS TREASON
LOOK THEY ARE
ROBBING YOU
THE ARMS RACE
OF PASSERSBYLAND

WALK
TALK
LAWS
AND
SACRIFICES

BEAT THE FASCISTS
THE ONLY ONES IN OUR RACES
WHO ARE NOT SHOOTING
DANCE A LOT
OR A FASCIST

OUR LAND(S)
ARE NOT FOR
SELLING (WE'LL
FIGHT FOR IT)
WAR YOUR ELECTIONS

THE ONLY
GAME NOT
IN MY TOY

GAME WE VOTE
AND STILL BEMOANG
THE ELECTION
RESULTS

SHITTY DAILYSHITS
YOU WILL FUCKING VOTE

ANTIFASCISTS

DOWN WITH THE FUCKS

UNITY

FRATRICIDALOUS YOU WILL DIE

THESSALONIKIS WAITING
[EDUCATION] TO THE PEOPLE

PEOPLE
OF THE
THESSALONICA

PEOPLE
OF THE
THESSALONICA

IN THESSALONIKI WE WILL SMASH FASCISM
THESSALAND

SMASH TO FASCISM

WE WANT PROFESSIONS

WE WANT HOUSING
AND SOCIAL SECURITY

WE WANT HOUSING
AND SOCIAL SECURITY

THE TOWN HALL HAS BEEN
OCCUPIED BY THE PEOPLE
FREE UNIVERSITY

SMASH TO
FASCISM

SMASH TO
FASCISM

SMASH TO
FASCISM

ABSTRACTION
DOWN WITH THE FUCKS
WE WANT HOUSING
NUMBER —

ABSTRACTION
DOWN WITH THE FUCKS
WE WANT HOUSING
NUMBER —

FREEDOM
AND
SOCIAL
SECURITY

ABSTRACTION
DOWN WITH THE FUCKS
WE WANT HOUSING
NUMBER —

PEOPLE
OF THE
STREETS
ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL
TO THE BARRICADES

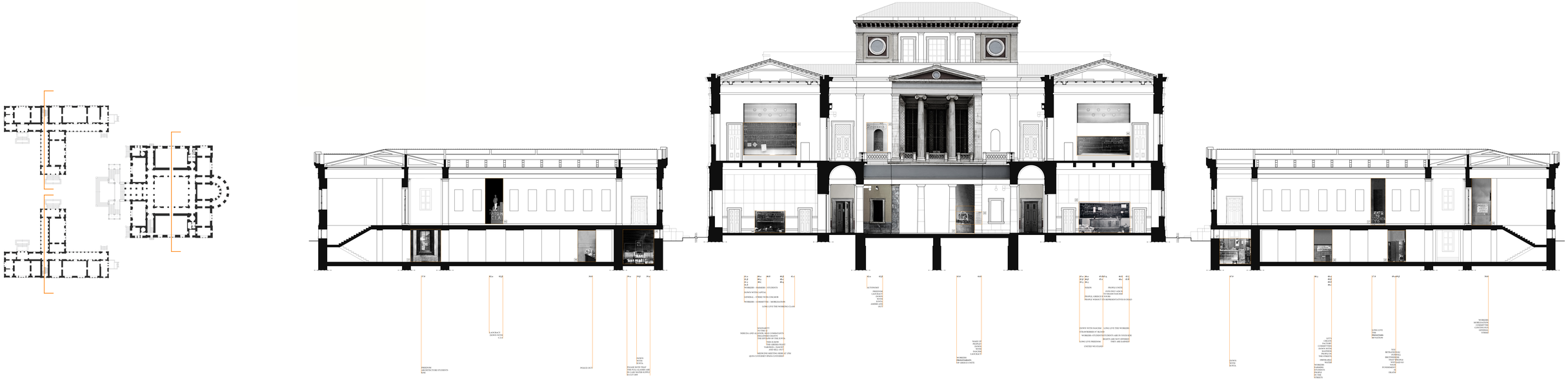
THE TOWN HALL HAS BEEN
OCCUPIED BY THE PEOPLE
FREE UNIVERSITY
ABSTRACTION
THE TOWN HALL
WAS BEEN OCCUPIED

SMASH TO
FASCISM

SMASH TO
FASCISM

SMASH TO
FASCISM

2.2.4-03. AP Physical Tests: West Section Collage (1:1000)



2.2.5. ‘Peace’ or ‘Anarchy’? Visual, Textual and Temporal Collages

In order to document AP’s uprising graffiti I produced a series of drawings. I’ve chosen to delimit my study to the neoclassical trilogy and prepare three drawings that not only show different parts of the complex but also move across the most public and visible spaces to the more private. The drawings are photomontages showing how the planned – the line drawing – and the unplanned – the historical graffiti photographs – meet and disrupt each other: the ‘Bright Polytechnic’ as envisioned by the architect and its benefactors together with the use that was never thought it would take.

As a basis for the Athens Polytechnic I combined existing digital survey drawings which were produced in 2002 by an NTUA team in the occasion of the planned restoration of the complex.[212] The restoration lasted for nearly a decade and aimed to bring the building as closely back to its original state as possible, eliminating any alteration made throughout the many years of its use.[213] The drawings are from a particular historical moment for this building which might not be the original (Beaux Art) moment but wishing to revive it. As far as the graffiti writings of the Polytechnic are concerned, they come from all three eras under question in this thesis. In this occasion the writings are not traced over; the graffiti photographs are placed directly to the line drawing. The images interrupt the line drawing making them look much alike Foster’s representations of the ‘Reichstag Graffiti’. The vast majority of the marks are textual and indexed at the bottom of the drawing following their spatial arrangement. The presentation of the graffiti content here resembles the referencing technique followed in Latour’s ‘Iconoclash’ book and challenges the linearity and orthodoxy of their reading. The Polytechnic series of drawings disturb one’s expectations because they convey a Beaux Art building in a non-Beaux Art way. Given that Beaux Art drawings are expected to be realistic, these drawings appear incomplete as there are only parts covered with fragments of a several past realities.

The juxtaposition of the neat drawing and the messy writings also vividly illustrates the iconoclastic dimension of these writings while highlighting their offensive character against the imposed ‘orderliness’ of the Regime. In a sense, the collage challenges the purity of the neoclassical image and, at the same time, questions the authority of the individuals involved in the process of its making: the architectural designers, the graffitists and the photographers. As much as graffiti pose a threat to the clinical environment of the Junta, so do the graffiti photographs to the clean and ordered architectural environment of the drawing. Graffiti infuse contingency and action to the seemingly immobile and inactive traditional line drawing.

These drawings should not be seen as formal or graphic exercises nor are mere assemblies of photographs that attempt to reconstruct a past image of the AP. Contrary, they are revelatory tools and exploratory devices. By deploying collage techniques, my aim here is to transfer the logic of the walls of the AP in the drawing: writings of different epochs inhabit, effect and disrupt one another.[214] Even though they remain distinct, the texts make different sense when seen together: one writing is read through the other. This is evident, for example, in the way the ‘Athenian Guernica’ – which I discuss in greater detail later in this chapter – disrupts, frames and in the process re-signifies the 1973 uprising writings with which it shares the same material surface. The shock in this case is not engendered by the form of the collage-drawing but rather from the new associations created between elements of different contexts. This is what gener-

The CAD drawings of the AP trilogy have kindly been offered to me by NTUA Professor Eleni Maistrou in January 2016. The drawings were produced in 2002 by the NTUA restoration team of the complex under the lead of Professor Nikolaos Kalogeras. They were slightly modified to meet the needs of the drawings I wished to produce.

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In 2012 the NTUA restoration project won the Europa Nostra Award but by June 2013 – the time when the committee of was expected to visit the complex to offer the prestigious EU Prize for Cultural Heritage to the architects – the buildings were extensively graffitied. To avoid this ‘ridicule’, a private individual sponsored the graffiti removal from the Polytechnic’s surfaces.

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Perhaps an alternative way to think of these drawings is as mosaics, rather than collages, as in them there is a set of rule that one wouldn’t normally find in a collage. Collage often evokes an art practice where things coming together in a random fashion, it is kind of unmeasured. Contrary, my drawings are very precise measures, where each photograph finds its way to a specific slot, looking more like mosaics.



Is fascism still lingering? Left: 'Death to fascism' (06.8) written during the 1973 Uprising. Right: 'Fascists we'll hung you'(07.b) on the AP in 2015.



The 1973 peace sign (10.a) and the 2015 anarchist symbol (01.b) occupying the same surface of the Athens Polytechnic.

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The allies have become the enemies. From left to right: Slogan on the AP in liberated Athens reads 'Welcome our friends. A grateful Greece will keep the peace in the Balkans' (00.0) ca 10.1944; 'USA Out' (11.0) written on the Polytechnic gate; 'Down with CIA' (02.8) graffitied during the 1973 Uprising.



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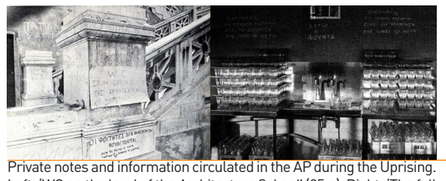
E07



Private notes and information circulated in the AP during the Uprising. Left: 'WC on the level of the Architecture School' (05.a). Right: 'The full glasses are in case water supply is cut' (39.8).

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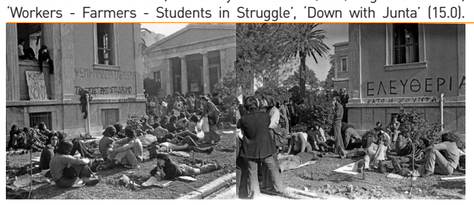
E07

On the west façades - the most visible ones from the Patision St - the slogans intensify in terms of content and size. The graffiti on the diametrically positioned Arts School and Rectory building of the Athens Polytechnic evince this trend. Left: 'Down with Junta', 'Bread - Education - Freedom', 'Proletariat in the Street', 'Laocracy - Freedom' (03.0). Right: 'Freedom', 'Workers - Farmers - Students in Struggle', 'Down with Junta' (15.0).



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E07

ates disturbance here: the contradictions actualised by and the ruptures generated from bringing these heterogeneous elements together. In a sense, the drawing reflects the "semantic instability" which graffiti is capable to cause and that – as discussed earlier in this chapter – the Junta could not tolerate.

The resituation of these marks in a new context allows the formulation of new meanings emerging from their (juxta)position on the surface of the drawing and blending with the line drawing. Depending on the degree of their visual and spatial heterogeneity, the elements of the collage create new interconnections ranging from modest to extreme. In any case, the collages are characterized by spatial discontinuity – since the archival material appears fragmented on the drawing – as well as temporal multiplicity, as graffiti images of all the historical moments explored in this thesis coexist.

Each element of these collage-compositions develops dynamic visual, verbal and historical relations with the others that surround and compete it, challenging their individual stable meanings. For example, as far as the visual is concerned, the resemblance of the encircled peace sign written during the 1973 Uprising with the contemporary anarchist symbol next to it makes one wonder about the past, current and future civil demands expressed on these walls **[126]**. Further, some slogans written in 2015 talk about fascism similarly to the ones executed 40 years ago, inviting the beholder of the drawing to identify the existing, or even create new, discursive affinities **[127]**. Also, different texts of distant historical eras seem to talk to or contradict with one another, as is the case with the 1944 liberation slogan which warmly welcomes the Allies in Athens (UK, USA and USSR) while the writings of the 1973 Uprising sitting next to it aggressively show their distrust towards them, especially the US (e.g., 'Americans' or 'USA Out') and its national agencies (e.g., 'CIA Out') **[128]**.

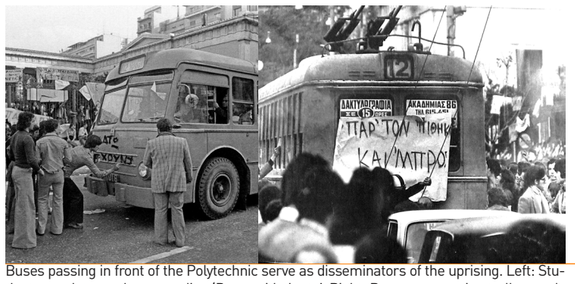
A careful reading of the drawings also reveals relations regarding scale, placement and topic. It demonstrates that the size of writings depends on their placement while the latter dictates their topics and vice versa. In terms of writing instruments, the slogans and notes that appear indoors are written primarily with chalks and markers whereas the ones outside are mainly with paint brushes (rarely with sprays) and are considerably larger. As far as the topics are concerned, they range from anti-dictatorial and education-related to class-oriented and merely informative. Some notes or small wall writings that one can find in more private and intimate spaces provide practical information and are addressed to the students who upraise. For example, one note informs the reader that the toilets are at the upper floor, a marker slogan asks students to respect the premises and not cause damage while another one politely request not to drink the water from the glasses 'as they are to be used in case the water supply is cut', and so on **[129]**. The ones opposing the Regime and its protagonists – such as 'Death to Junta' and 'Death to Papadopoulos' – hold the most prominent, external positions. Boldly written and graphically raw slogans that invoke powerful concepts – such as 'Freedom' and 'Laocracy' – co-exist with words like 'Fascism' and 'Junta', thus weaving a textual collage where the past meets the present and ideological totalitarianism encounters political idealism **[130]**.

2.2.6. 'Polytechnic Here': A Coup of Writing and Reading

The collages also evince that the AP transmits verbal (counter-)information thus transforming it into a large scale text. The words are written in various magnitudes and positioned in specific places to be read by particular audiences, resembling a newspaper's layout. Some are bold and work as the headlines and are put on the front cover – i.e. the west façade of the complex – whereas others are less important targeting a different audience and are placed inside. The surfaces of the AP 'broadcast' the uprising and all individuals are invited to contribute to this unedited, uncensored and horizontal communication channel and in the process create a multi-authored text. The students print and distribute their 'manifestos' hand by hand (or scatter them) in Patission Street. Private cars and mass transportation vehicles are utilised to enable students' texts reach a geographically dispersed audience bypassing the censoring mechanisms of the Dictatorship [131]. It is as if the writings on walls, banners and flyers complement the famous radio station that the students have set up to communicate their views to the public and through which the iconic motto 'Polytechnic Here' has emerged and gradually established in the collective consciousness [132].

Anthropologist of writing Béatrice Fraenkel has demonstrated the capabilities of "extraordinary" writing instances – as she terms several occasions of public writing, including graffiti – to communicate meanings and produce effects beyond their written messages when read.[215] For Fraenkel, the very acts of inscribing the text, giving shape to its appearance and carefully placing it in appropriate public spaces are more important than the message per se. In other words, graffiti and other extraordinary writings have the capacity to convey effective "graphic", "displaying" and "performative" forces depending on the way they are presented to the reader. This presupposes, according to Fraenkel, a focus on the situational aspects of the writing and reading acts, as it is in the particular context that they acquire their full force. The offensive graphic articulation of the Polytechnic texts, their displaying force stemming from the their attentive placement on the specific edifices in the particular district and the performance of the acts of writing and reading in the situation of the Uprising against the Dictatorship must have been – and still is for the researcher of the corresponding archival material – "a kind of written coup", as Fraenkel puts it in her discussion of May 1968 slogans.[216]

The vast majority of photographs from the Polytechnic Uprising depict a large crowd holding placards and banners, writing or shouting slogans. The uprising has a spectacular dimension which presupposes a physical and textual crowd making its explicitly political appearance visible and open to the outside, especially Patission Street. This is in stark contrast to the archival material of the aftermath of the Uprising [133]. This time, the rammed gate is presented nearly emptied of people and full of wreckage. The first and main concern of the Regime is to wipe out the traces of the revolt: a few officials clean the remnants of the gate and the graffiti written on the main (west) façade are obliterated the very next morning [134]. In a sense, by cutting the inscriptions short and diminishing their already ephemeral lives the Regime shows that is not willing to allow these civil claims to materialise. It is as if that the prolonged presence of the writings would legitimate them. Further, the blatantly offensive slogans do not bother the Junta much (e.g., 'Death to Fascism'). Contrary, particular words with specific political connotations, such as 'proletariat', are censored and hastily covered before being removed [135].



Buses passing in front of the Polytechnic serve as disseminators of the uprising. Left: Student completes a slogan reading 'Down with Junta'. Right: Banner on moving trolley reads 'Take the monkey and get out of here'.

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The Polytechnic radio station broadcasting the uprising. The placard reads 'Colleagues do not destroy equipment and furniture'.

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E07

215

Fraenkel, B. (2010). Writing Acts: When Writing Is Doing. In D. Barton & U. Papen (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Writing: Understanding Textually-Mediated Worlds* (pp. 33-43). London: Continuum.

Fraenkel, B. (2010). Writing Acts: When Writing Is Doing. In D. Barton & U. Papen (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Writing: Understanding Textually-Mediated Worlds* (pp. 33-43). London: Continuum. p. 34.

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The Polytechnic gate during and after the 1973 Uprising. Left: The gate full of people and graffiti. Right: The rammed gate empty of people and full of wreckage.

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Top to bottom: The west façade of the Rectory building during the Polytechnic Uprising when it is full of graffiti and the same surface clean a few hours after the gory repression (18.0).

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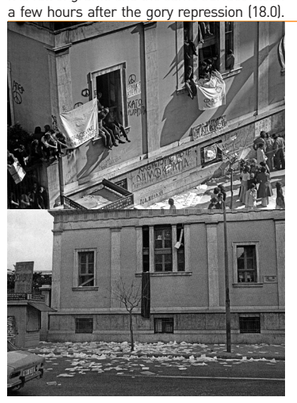
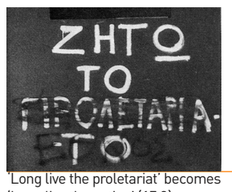
E07





'Long live the proletariat' becomes 'Long live the nation' (17.0)

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Apart from a 'coup of writing', the Polytechnic Uprising is also a 'coup of reading'. Graffiti destabilise the reading practices established by the Regime where ambivalence is unwanted. By violently introducing, presenting and circulating this type of writing to the city, the students not only address but also shape a new kind public readership. Historian David Henkin – in his book *City Reading* which examines the role of urban texts in developing new, materially bound, public reading habits in antebellum New York – urges us to understand the street as a "verbal collage" of competing information around which "a new kind of public is born".[217] In the case of the Polytechnic an ephemeral (counter-)public is formed,[218] a site where people and texts come together in order to deliberate on political issues of common and/or public concern.

The Polytechnic is transformed into a physical public forum and its surfaces into mediated public fora, allowing us to conceptualise them as a "space of appearance" which has famously defined by Hanna Arendt as a place "where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly".[219] The space of appearance is not permanent but performative: it takes place and then disappears, lasting as long as the political activity.[220] This kind of public space is created and recreated anew by action; it is actualised every time that invites political participation. Gathering physically together for political purposes or even textually addressing a politically engaging public body is not a topographically, architecturally or materially blind act. Contrary, it 'takes place' literally as well as metaphorically. The action is not only spatially and materially supported but also the very spatial and material supports are that for which the action comes into being in the first place.[221] In the case of the Polytechnic, the creation of the space of appearance is associated to the fight for a space of free speech and access to public and uncensored education.[222] The AP seems to be a spatially, materially and symbolically privileged place for the constant recreation and reinvention of a space of appearance in different historical moments for several political struggles, especially when these are related to issues of employment and justice, constitutional rights and access to education.

The main slogan of the Uprising – i.e. 'Bread, Education, Freedom' – that is shouted by the students, broadcasted from the pirate radio station and written on the walls of the Polytechnic, summarises the core political claims of the Greek society during the Junta [136]. The tripartite nature of the motto undeniably resembles the French 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité'. Given that, as Baudrillard argues, "the real revolutionary media during May were the walls and their speech, the silk-screen posters and the hand-painted notices",[223] it might worth shifting our focus for a moment on the relationships that the texts of the Polytechnic Uprising have with their foreign counterparts.

Henkin, D. (1998). *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. p. 3, 7.

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For more details on the formation of graffiti (counter-)publics in Athens see Avramidis, K. (2014c). Mapping the Geographical and Spatial Characteristics of Politicized Urban Art in the Athens of Crisis. In M. Tsilimpounidi & A. Walsh (Eds.), *Remapping 'Crisis': A Guide to Athens* (pp. 183-203). London: Zero Books.

219

Arendt, H. (1998/1958). The Human Condition (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. pp. 198-199.

220

This does not mean, however, that whenever individuals are gathered to deliberate on political matters this constitutes by definition a space of appearance. In Arendt's own words "wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever". Arendt, H. (1998/1958). *The Human Condition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 199.

This material and spatial aspects in the process of appearing politically lead Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou – in their joint study on the importance of the performative on the political – to highlight the need to shift the focus from the space of appearance to the "spacing appearance". Butler, J, & Athanasiou, A. (2013). *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 194.

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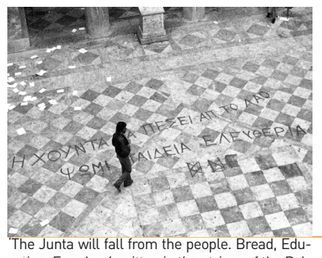
The Academic Asylum Law (AAL) is founded after the end of the Dictatorship in order to ensure that spaces where uncensored thought and free circulation of ideas is protected will exist in the future. These spaces of free expression would secure the basic democratic rights thus making them resorts in potential repressive times and bases to fight against and avoid the repetition of another Junta. According to the AAL, all university spaces in the country are covered from freedom of speech and research. Everyone working, teaching or learning in academic premises has the legitimate right of academic freedom. The contemporary distorted – sometimes abusive – usage of the AAL has turned it into a subject of controversy in the public discourse. The Greek state repealed the law in 2011 to cope with riotous demonstrations. Even today, the AAL remains a taboo subject with strong supporters and opponents.



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'The Junta will fall from the people. Bread, Education, Freedom' written in the atrium of the Polytechnic on 15.11.1973.

223

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (C. Levin, Trans.). St Louis, MO: Telos Press. p. 176.

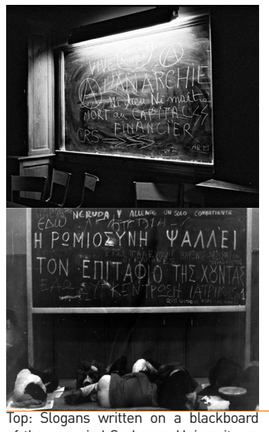
2.2.7. From Paris and Santiago to Athens: Hypertextual Relations?

The majority of the topics employed from the Polytechnic's slogan writers seem to be revolution-related, ranging from the expression of ideological views and dissatisfaction towards the Regime to claims for constitutional rights and polity change. If someone studies these graphisms more carefully, however, soon notices that there is a series of them – placed in prominent surfaces – that may seems 'out of context' or make no sense for the contemporary researcher. Some of them bear enigmatic names while others point to geographically distant places.

Even though the Polytechnic uprising happens in the spirit and inherited legacy of May 1968, it seems that its references are to temporally closer events. Contrary to what one would expect, the slogans on the walls of the AP do not directly mention the Parisian May events or the Prague Spring. Due to their direct associations, however, one can draw links especially between the university-centred, student-led uprisings of the Sorbonne University in 1968 Paris and the NTUA in 1973 Athens. The juxtaposition of images from the two cases emphatically demonstrates their close discursive resemblances and strong visual affinities. After all, most of the 'art' produced in the streets of Paris comes from students of the École des Beaux-Arts while in Athens from the School of Fine Arts which was then hosted in the AP. In both cases, the targets are similar – such as university walls and blackboards **[137]** – and the graphic means are the same (e.g., paint brushes, markers and sprays in black and red colour), producing images which seem as if they were taken in a single occasion. The only difference seems to be the writing language as even the themes are similar, concerned with, for example, the mobilisation and solidarity of other social groups (e.g., school students, workers, etc.), or attempt to challenge the establishment **[138]**. In terms of content, the Greek writings are more direct, less poetic but equally idealistic when studied together with their French counterparts.[224] Of course there are some exceptions that remind the Parisian ones, such as the 'Death to realism' **[139]**. Graphically, illicit public lettering in Paris is more sophisticated compared to that of the Athens which is cruder. In any case, from the famous 'Under the Cobblestones, the Beach' in Paris to 'Hang the Fascists' in Athens, graffiti provide an elaboration of aesthetic dissent.

The slogans' visual affinity with those of the May 1968 events, positions the Polytechnic Uprising in a specific place in the history of student protest movements of the 1960s and early 1970s. Other writings point in places and individuals thus creating new links and revealing the ideological orientation of the November 1973 revolution in Athens. Here, I limit my discussion to the two most emblematic and recurring slogans related to events happening in two diametrically opposite sides of the planet – namely the September 1973 Chilean coup d'ětat and the October 1973 Thai Popular Uprising which take place one and two months before the Polytechnic revolution respectively – that have a significant impact in the Athenian student imagery.

The graphism reading the surname of the elected Chilean President Salvador Allende which adorns the gate of the AP is inextricably linked with the Uprising's iconography **[140]**. Allende becomes a symbol of the people who fight for their values and ideals, and becomes a synonym of freedom.[225] The limited writing space of the marble column of the AP's gate forces the graffitist to place the last letter of the Chilean president's surname in a second line, offering it a unique, very characteristic, graphic appearance. The slogan is so emblematic that is part of every representation that refers to November 1973 events in Athens, such as the Little Prince who pays



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Top: Slogans written on a blackboard of the occupied Sorbonne University on 13.05.1968. Bottom: Slogans on a blackboard of the occupied Athens Polytechnic on 16.11.1973. (40.0).



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Left: Slogan in Parisian streets reads 'estudiants solidaires des travailleurs' [students solidarity to workers] during May 1968. Right: Slogans in the Athens Polytechnic read 'Workers-Farmers-Students, Capital Down, General Strike', 'Long Live the Working Class' (41.0).

224

The Parisian slogans are largely influenced by situationists' texts – such as Guy Debord's texts – parts of which are sometimes directly reproduced as quotes on the walls. Debord, G. (1994/1967). T*he Society of the Spectacle* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). New York, NY: Zone Books. For more details on graffiti in the context of May 1968 events in Paris see Rohan, M. (1988). *Paris '68: Graffiti, Posters, Newspapers & Poems of the Events of May 1968*. London: Impact Books.

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Left: Parisian slogan written on 03.05.1968 reads 'Soyez realistes, demandez l'impossible' [Be realists, ask the impossible]. Right: Slogan on the Averof building written during the Polytechnic Uprising reads 'Death to realism' (04.a).



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Left: The Polytechnic gate after the uprising (14.0) with the slogan 'Allende' occupying a prominent position. Right: A crowd of people marching to support the election of Salvador Allende for president in Santiago, Chile.

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President Salavador Allende (1908-1973) – a leading Marxist figure in the Latin American region – was replaced by Dictator Augusto Pinochet after a USA-backed coup of the Chilean Armed Forces on 11 September 1973. The same day he committed suicide in Santiago's parliament under the pressure of his overthrow from power.

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Little Prince paying homage to the gate of the Polytechnic. The represented graffiti read the iconic 'Allende' and 'Down with Junta'.

Top: Students upraise at the Polytechnic gate. The placards read 'Thailand and 'Death to Fascism'. Bottom: A graffitied bus is hijacked by revolting students during the 1973 October Uprising in Thailand's capital Bangkok.

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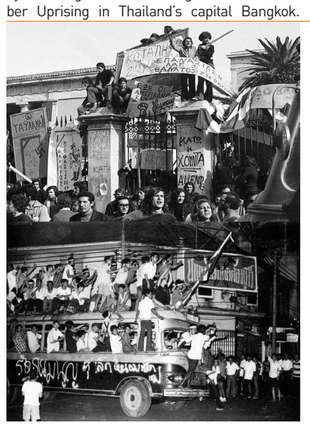

homage with his trademark flower to the graffiti-covered destroyed gate which read 'Allende' and 'Junta Out' **[141]**.

In the occasion of Thailand, the slogans on the walls and banners of the Polytechnic refer to a series of events and a movement rather than a person as is the case with Allende. Again, this pointer is rather timely referring to the anti-dictatorial uprising in Bangkok which has as its epicentre the Thammasat University **[142]**. The similarities between the Thai and Greek cases are many (e.g., dictatorial rule, USA affiliations, university-centred mobilisation, etc.), engendering optimism and determination among the student movement in Athens.[226] Most importantly, drawing links to the fresh and successful – albeit temporarily – Thai Uprising confirms the dynamism and power that students have while positioning the Athenian case into the map, in a web of insurgents.

These graphisms might play several roles: they pay tribute to those who consider peers (and might read reports in the newspapers), they invite viewers to think (or learn if they are unaware) of the part each of these mobilisations has in the continuum of political emancipation while placing the AP in this very continuum, and so on. These slogan-pointers arguably exoticise the political situation of these places or persons, but also highlight the ecumenical character of the raised claims that they all share. Maybe an appropriate notion to describe these references to individuals and locations from far away is 'hypertext', as one graffito links to another establishing a web of relationships. The fact that the nature of these relationships is not 'multilinear' – as in the internet world – but rather 'cumulative', resembles the literary understanding of the term, and especially that of literary theorist Gérard Genette. In his book *Palimpsests* that examines the second degree nature of literary texts, Genette argues that all transtextual relationships between literary texts are 'hypertextual', that is a text (hypertext) that is "grafted upon" an earlier text (hypotext) which rewrites, rearticulates or points to.[227] Yet, what is important is not the end result, i.e. the hypertext, but the links that it creates with other texts, the kind of relationships it establishes with them and the nature of these 'references' or 'rewritings'. Mutatis mutandis, the hypertextual graphisms of the Polytechnic suggest groups of geographically dispersed graphisms and connected surfaces. In doing so, they weave a network of surfaces of dissent, a protest map with physical centres and protagonists around the planet. This hypertextual nature is constitutional characteristic of the palimpsestuous texts. Moving away from the figurative use of the term, it is now time to turn to the literal and material nature of the palimpsest.

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For an extensive study of the relationship between the Thai and Greek case in this context see Kallivretakis, L. (2004). 'Tonight Will be Thailand': Interpretation of an 'Exotic' Slogan of the Polytechnic Uprising. *Taxydromos, 246,* 46-51. [in Greek].

227

Genette, G. (1997/1982). *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (C. Newman & C. Doubinsky, Trans.). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

2.2.8. Palimpsestuous Readings: An Inventive Rewriting of Unrelated Texts

The AP is the sole case study of this dissertation where writings from all three historical moments cohabit, or – to be more precise – could have cohabited. As such, the surfaces of the Polytechnic are the connective tissue of these different temporalities. This is not fortuitous, as the Polytechnic – due to its placement in the particular neighbourhood of the city, its political nature and symbolism – historically attracted graffiti and is still prone to it. This constant writing, overwriting and rewriting of inscriptions transforms its surfaces into palimpsests, in the most literal sense of the term.

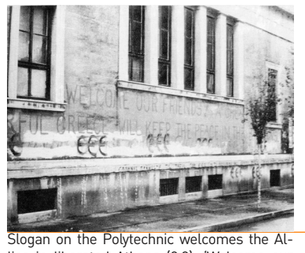
The word 'palimpsest' etymologically derives from the combination of two Greek words: *palin* and *psestos*, which mean 'again' and 'scrape' respectively. Terminologically, the palimpsest brings together erasure with sequence; it directly links materiality and temporality. In its basic illustration, the palimpsest is a material writing surface from which its primary text has been effaced to provide a blank space for new writings. The palimpsest is a 'recycled' material, a 'sustainable destruction' of the writing surface, so to speak. It is a reusable surface where disparate texts from various times co-exist, yet often indiscernible and/or partial. This is due to the incomplete erasure of the original and/or other earlier text(s) which allows them to survive. It is this very characteristic that offers to the palimpsest its very special place in public imagination, i.e. its strange capacity to retain traces of the past which are considered permanently lost.

The 'palimpsest' is a fashionable concept, widely used – primarily as a metaphor – in several instances and disciplines such as literature and psychoanalysis. It is also commonly used in architectural discourse referring to the constant demolition and rebuilding, 'removal' and 're-writing', of urban settings such as Berlin or Prague and the consequences that this process has on the memory of the cities.[228] Here, however, the palimpsest is seen more as a material artefact and graphic phenomenon, i.e. in its literal sense, rather than a conceptual metaphoric construction. The palimpsest, the surface upon which the different graffiti texts are written, is studied as physical entity.

In order to further explore this special writing situation of the Polytechnic's material surface, I produced a drawing of a specific part of the wall in 1:1 scale. To do so, I use one photograph portraying graphisms on the AP from each of the three historical moments. Specifically, the first image depicts a graffito reading 'Welcome Our Friends, Greece Will Keep the Peace' which occupied the surface of the AP in the freshly liberated Greek capital immediately after the Axis occupation (most probably on 12.10.1944) **[143]**. The second emblematic photograph captures the damaged Polytechnic's gate a few hours after the 17.11.1973 uprising, at the very site where it was suppressed **[144]**. The third image is from one of the most gigantic graffiti interventions of all times which is related to the crisis era **[145]**. This close up photograph depicts the very moment that the graffito is removed – i.e. on 16.03.2015, less than 15 days after its creation – and I've chosen this one to underline the contested and palimpsestic nature of the surface.

The purpose of this drawing exercise is not to quest for or attempt to recover the 'original' text(s). Rather, it seeks to graphically represent and examine the multiple texts concurrently, as a single entity. After all, as I was preparing the drawing, it quickly became visible that I could not separate the one graphism from the other. While tracing them together with the writing surface, the inscriptions started merging with, stemming from and being part of one another. This

228 For example, see Huyssen, A. (2003). *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Thomas, A. (2010). *Prague Palimpsest: Writing, Memory, and the City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.



Slogan on the Polytechnic welcomes the Allies in liberated Athens (0.0): 'Welcome our friends. A grateful Greece will keep the peace in the Balkans'. ca 10.1944.

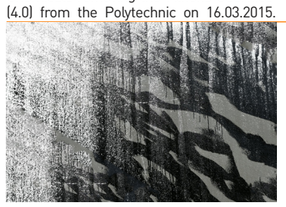
143 E07

The day after the Polytechnic Uprising (14.0). Slogans on the gate read: 'Down with Junta', 'Allende', 'The students are with you'; 'Night of 15th to 16th November 1973'.



144 E07

Chemicals removing the 'Athens Guernica' (4.0) from the Polytechnic on 16.03.2015.



145 E07

results to a drawing showing writings which one cannot really tell when and where they start or end. As such, the structure of the AP palimpsest is better understood not as a layered but an interwoven one, since the writings are inextricably intertwined with each other. In a sense, the drawing renders visible the symbiotic relationship that the inscriptions share with the writing surface and shows that what really matters is not the texts per se but the type of relations they forge. It reveals the multi-authored and multi-temporal dimension of the 'palimpsestic' text while highlighting the 'palimpsestuous' nature of the architectural surface and, by extension, the need for such a reading.

Literature scholar Sarah Dillon, in her extensive genealogical study of the palimpsest in literature and human thought, defines the palimpsest as "an involuted phenomenon where otherwise unrelated texts are involved and entangled, intricately interwoven, interrupting and inhabiting each other".[229] The key aspect in this definition is the suggested 'involution' of texts. This means that a palimpsest makes sense only when all texts are read and deciphered together since focusing on a singular underlying textual layer would mean going against its very nature. It is also important to note the words 'otherwise unrelated'. This means that the texts of a palimpsest might not be related a priori but they develop – or we the readers invent for them – relations once they share the shame writing surface.

Dillon uses the word 'palimpsestuous' to describe the resulting structure stemming from the layering palimpsestic process.[230] This neologism "does not name something as, or as making, a palimpsest, but describes the type of relationality reified in the palimpsest".[231] This palimpsestuous nature suggests a structure that allows the complex co-existence of multiple graphisms to be appreciated and permit the writings of the palimpsest, and the palimpsest itself, to make sense only when the inscriptions are studied "all present together at all times".[232] In order to achieve this 'co-presence' there is a sort of guesswork required that has to do with how one negotiates the complexity of relations deriving from the palimpsest: identifying and uncovering previous, partially erased, texts; relating old texts anew with the more recent ones, and so on. "Since the texts of the palimpsest bear no necessary relation to each other", Dillon argues, "palimpsestuous reading is an inventive process of creating relations where there may, or should, be none".[233] Similarly, in the drawing there is an amount of inventiveness involved in the process of reconstructing the singular scriptural surface where all texts coexist. In a sense, the drawing suggests a palimpsestuous reading with graphic means: a reading that not only addresses the existing but also creates new relationships between the different texts on the palimpsest's surface.

So, what happens when the entangled texts, the palimpsestuous structure, is read as a totality? What happens when we read the peace sign of the Polytechnic Uprising on the same surface with the broken promises for a peaceful post-occupied Athens? What is the result of the recent removal of the vast graffito from the AP: a blank canvas inviting new writing, the resurfacing of 'Allende', or both? Also, is every scraping and writing effort an attempt to remove or at least injure the inscribed history of the surface? And doesn't this kind of gesture mix the texts even further while complicating our reading?

Different voices, spaces and temporalities are synchronised for a moment before being mixed up again. In a sense, the palimpsestuous reading is constituted in the moment right now by past texts projected to a possible, open future. As such, the palimpsestuous drawing contains traces of the palimpsest's past, present and future. It is an inventive rewriting of the palimpsest's

229 Dillon, S. (2007). T*he Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*. London: Continuum. p. 4.

230 Dillon is very clear with the palimpsest-related terms she uses and the definitions she provides respond to the ones in the OED. For Dillon, "where 'palimpsestic' refers to the process of layering that produces a palimpsest, 'palimpsestuous' describes the structure that one is presented with as a result of that process, and the subsequent reappearance of the underlying script". Dillon, S. (2007). *The Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory.* London: Continuum. p. 4.

231 Dillon, S. (2007). T*he Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*. London: Continuum. p. 4.

232 Dillon, S. (2007). T*he Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*. London: Continuum. p. 5.

233 Dillon, S. (2007). T*he Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*. London: Continuum. p. 83.

multi-temporal texts. This (re)writing *about* the AP palimpsest, however, is also "a process of writing *on* the palimpsest - of partaking in its history and of adding another layer to the involution of texts that characterizes that history".[234] Every writing on and about a palimpsest is embedded in its very history: it is haunted by the past inscriptions while remaining open to future texts thus guaranteeing its constantly rewritable nature.

The palimpsest reveals how time and human agency undermine and animate the seemingly stable and singular character of texts by foregrounding their inherently unruly, ambiguous and heterogeneous nature. Conceptualized as such, the AP façade ceases to be conceptually simplistic, ideologically or aesthetically monopolistic and becomes multi-vocal and multi-temporal. It is transformed into a contested surface where the past and the future meet (in) the present while dominant ideology is interwoven with its opposition. The palimpsest – multi-authored and unruly by nature – can be seen as the graphic response to the aesthetics of the Junta. The open-ended character of palimpsestuous surfaces, such as those of the AP, is the remedy to the attempted aestheticisation and, thus, depoliticisation of graffiti.

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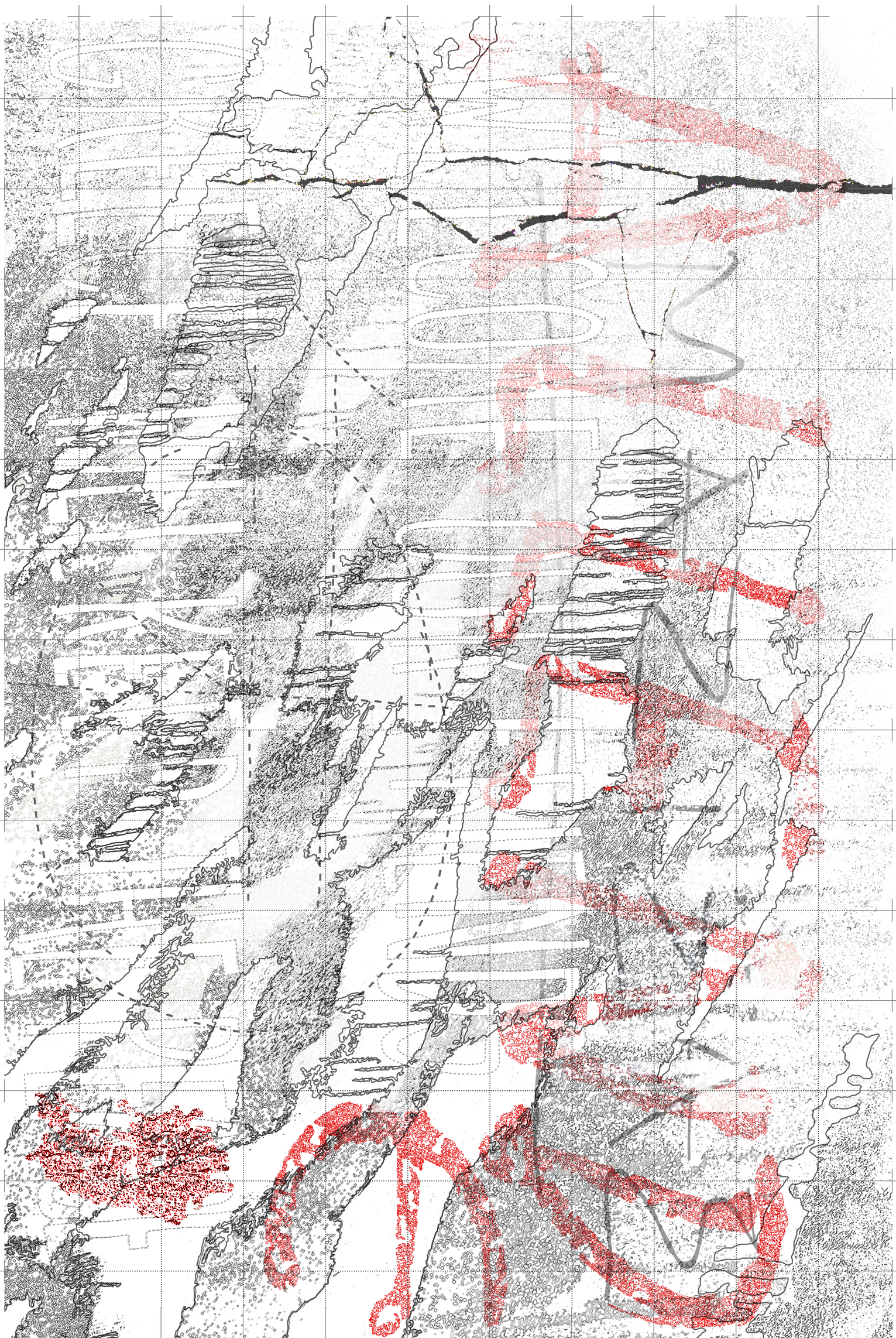
Dillon, S. (2007). T*he Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*. London: Continuum. p. 9.



2.2.10. Demystifying the Writing Surface: The Reappearance of the Repressed Traces

The surfaces of the AP allow, or rather suggest, palimpsestuous drawings and, by extension, readings. The way its walls function, however, is not palimpsest-like. The mere fact that the erased traces cannot be physically recollected and/or materially recovered constitutes other metaphoric models appropriate to describe the function of the AP's walls. Indeed, the way these marks are removed and their stories are repressed resemblances more to Sigmund Freud's writing tablet which he considers to be an apparatus to understand how impressions are inscribed on our psychical world while representing the operation of human memory system and its relationship with consciousness. Freud links writing directly to memory; he sees it as a means of remembering. Yet, this is not what makes this of interest here. Rather, it is the structure he refers to which matters as it efficiently describes how writings that made impression – even when they are erased from the surface – continue to remain stored and active affecting the memory, identity and meaning of the fresher inscriptions.

In order to illustrate his perception-mnemonic model, Freud appeals to a child's toy of his time, the 'Mystic Writing Pad', which can store traces while remaining open to accept unlimited new inscriptions. In his short essay *A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad'*, Freud provides a description of the function and form of this writing tablet.[235] The Pad consists of three layers: a top layer made of a transparent celluloid sheet; a middle layer of thin translucent waxed paper; and at the bottom there is block of dark wax. When one writes, draws or simply presses on the upper plastic sheet with a pointed stylus, tracks of the gesture appear on the middle layer because it makes a contact with the dark wax backing. To erase the traces, one has to simply detach the wax sheet from the wax slab underneath it. This causes the magic disappearance of the script, bringing the writing surface of the Pad back to its blank condition ready to host new impressions. The fact that the outer layer is free for future inscriptions does not mean, however, that the past ones have been lost forever. Contrary, they are preserved in the inner wax layer. As such, the Pad is a not a mere display surface of current and future impressions but also a depository of the past and present ones. Thus, as Freud argues, it performs both the temporary and permanent functions of memory, and it does so by dividing them into "two separate but interrelated component parts or systems": the top one receives stimuli while the one underneath is the storehouse of their traces.[236]

Arguably some impressions are deeper and thus more enduring than others. According to the aforementioned model, the trace of an impression seems to depend on the applied force, the sharpness of the writing instrument and the 'softness' of the wax recipient. Further, some traces are intentionally, forcefully and rapidly removed while others are more gently and gradually erased or are left to fade away in time. Thus, extending the metaphor, one can argue that some marks are violently repressed – due to their association with a taboo or a traumatic experience – while others pass to oblivion. No matter what the case, however, a faint trace remains embedded in the memory waiting its actualisation. Of course, the imprint – which was only visible on the upper surface sheet – is not preserved intact in the deeper level. The engraving changes shape as newer impressions are inscribed on the wax. It is also determined by the time passed since its erasure as well as the quantity and quality of the writings that come over it. In a similar manner

235 Freud, S. (1959/1925). A Note upon the "Mystic Writing Pad". In J. Strachey (Ed.), *Sigmund Freud: Collected Papers (Vol. V)* (pp. 175-180). New York, NY: Basic Books.

236 Freud, S. (1959/1925). A Note upon the "Mystic Writing Pad". In J. Strachey (Ed.), *Sigmund Freud: Collected Papers (Vol. V)* (pp. 175-180). New York, NY: Basic Books. p. 179.

to the palimpsestuous scripts, newer and older are mixed up with each other creating a fresh text every time.

Literature scholar Juliet Fleming, in her detailed examination of the writing practices in early modern England, observes that "the whitewashed wall could be argued to comprise a writing apparatus that fulfilled the functions of receptivity and retention long before Freud found them combined in the Mystic Pad".[237] In so doing, Fleming allows us to draw a direct link between wall writing and the Pad, offering us a powerful way to understand the impact and function of graffiti and its removal. Thus, pursuing the analogy even further, the removal of the anti-dictatorial graffiti from the AP is equivalent to the psychic operations of memory repression in moments of anxiety and trauma. When one uses this metaphor in the urban context should remember, however, that the practice of erasing is – either explicitly or implicitly – motivated by several criteria, such as taste, power and ideology. This kind of forced – albeit temporal – amnesia, or rather imposed censorship and repression of particular sets of writing from public view, demonstrates that the politics of place and memory are interwoven and constantly under negotiation.

The architectural surface of emblematic and symbolic edifices, such as the AP, seems to be a privileged place where the social conscious meets the unconscious, or rather, where the local unconscious – with all its repressed memories, disorders and desires – manifests itself. And, to continue the psychoanalytical metaphor, graffiti are like social slips of tongue that find their way from the collective unconscious to the visible surface-level; a social unconscious expressed in words on the urban conscious skin. After all, the previous impressions on the surface are never completely or permanently removed. Rather, they remain inactive, waiting their actualisation by or interweaving with the most recent written text. Graffitists write on the AP so as to remind us not to forget its past. Sometimes they do so gently while others more emphatically. By writing on it today, they rewrite its past and shape its future. In a kind of celebration of the collective memory with graphic means, graffitists rewrite and overwrite the palimpsest of the AP, inviting us to exercise our palimpsestuous readings.

237 Fleming, J. (2001). *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England*. London: Reaktion. p. 74.

2.2.11. The Athenian Guernica: From the Monument to the Palimpsest

The smashed gate after the intrusion of the tank in the AP. Police cleans the traces of the Uprising. 146 E07





The monumental 'Athens Guernica' graffiti on 03.03.2015. Over a night three local graffitists managed to cover the whole Rector's building. 147 E07

As historical material demonstrates, the visual situation of the AP before and after the Uprising is considerably different. I'm not, of course, referring to the complete absence of people here. Rather, I'm talking about the immediate measures taken in order to clean the wreckage left behind and the attempt to banish the graphically and politically 'offensive' writing from the walls **[146]**. This violent eradication of the Uprising's traces does not only seek to radically modify the visual universe of the area but also aims to repress the collective memory. The very effort to eliminate the inscriptions, however, puts them under the spotlight; it highlights and affirms their power. In other words, the very act of repressing the graffiti makes their imprint on memory more intense. To remember the Mystic Writing Pad, the suddenly blanked upper layer of the AP does not mean that the inscriptions are completely removed but rather temporally visually silenced, repressed to the back of the memory where they continue to live and affect future writings with their ghostly traces.

This banishing tradition does not stop in the Junta but continues on today's overwhelmingly graffitied walls of the AP. This happened emphatically recently after a monumental graffiti intervention which – over a night, on 03.03.2015 – covered the entire Rector's building **[147]**. Its arrival in the visual landscape of the Athenian city centre, however, coupled with its placement, biblical size, black-white aesthetics and abstract form, shocks the – undoubtedly familiar with graffiti – Greek society. The graffito, apart from the morphological deconstruction of the building's façade, manages to trigger a hot debate and hit the headlines of the mass media, while also becoming subject of scholarly study by domestic academics.[238]

Of course, it didn't take long for the graffito to acquire a nickname: the 'Guernica' of Athens. It might not be the best matching simile – as the one is figurative whereas the other is abstract – yet it is a rather interesting one because it creates visual as well as conceptual associations. As visual sociologist Myrto Tsilimpounidi reminds us in her reading of the piece, both the AP and the city of Guernica are associated to resistance and she interprets the image of the graffito as reflective of the disastrous consequences of crisis on Greek universities.[239] The Athenian Guernica and the reactions it invites expose the hypocrisy regarding AP's image and its role in contemporary society. The disregard of education in this time of austerity, and the diminishing power of the Polytechnic in particular, are rendered visible in the graffito.

Due to the enormousness of the drawing, this piece is considered 'scandalous' as everyone is still wondering how this operation – which would need dozens of hours to complete – not only happened in the heart of the city but also passed unnoticed and unreported. Commentaries of this kind do not focus on the graffito's aesthetics but rather on the fact that the University and the State are insufficiently equipped to deal with and/or respond to such acts. Of course, the piece has also repeatedly been called 'ugly' and 'monstrous'. Some much more hyperbolical voices have even accused it causing "the death of democracy".[240] No matter how it is called, one thing is for sure: the graffito is a success. The magnitude of the intervention and its shocking visual affects forced Nikos Xydakis, the Deputy Minister of Culture, to make a public statement on the issue:[241]

238 For example, see Drakopoulou, K. (2015b). The Mural Intervention on the Athens Polytechnic: A Case Study of the Aesthetics of Destruction in Art. In A*esthetics & Ethics Conference*. Athens: Technological Educational Institute of Athens. [in Greek]; Moutsopoulos, T. (2015). The Shock of the Skin: An Approach to an Artistic Action that Divided as Nothing Else the Recent Artistic Discourse in Greece. In P. Petsini & D. Christopoulos (Eds.), *Censorship in Greece* (pp. 115-121). Athens: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. [in Greek].

239 Tsilimpounidi briefly discusses Picasso's work in the context of the Spanish civil war and draws linkages to the Athenian Guernica. For more details see Tsilimpounidi, M. (2017). *Sociology of Crisis: Visualising Urban Austerity*. London: Routledge. p. 148.

240 Zampoukas, A. (2015). The Death of Democracy. *Protagon*, 7 March. [in Greek].

241 Xydakis, N. (2015). Reaction of the Deans' Committee for the Graffiti on the Polytechnic. *Naftemporiki*, 9 March. [in Greek].



148
F07

The buffing crew cleans only the walls leaving traces of the Guernica behind. 24.05.2015.



149
G07

Days after the removal of the 'Athens Guernica', a piece with similar aesthetics appears in Patision Street.

Today, two and a half years later, the Rector's building walls are bombed with tags and throw-ups from end to end only up to a certain height compared to the supernatural unified Guernica that occupied the entire building as a second black and white skin.

242



150
E07

People protesting against the removal of the Athens Guernica graffiti on 16.03.2015.

> The graffito on the Polytechnic reflects the crisis in the country, the city and Stournari Street. Its darkness emerges from the gloomy microclimate of the area. At the same time, the graffiti aggressively occupied the AP and vandalized the architectural monument. Not only distorted its morphology but also its historical physiognomy.

The above statement perceives the temporal change of edifice's appearance as desecration of AP's history rather than seeing it as an additional layer to its rich history. Most importantly, the Deputy Minister characterises the building a 'monument'. A monument is a structure that invites commemoration; it asks us to participate in a performance of memory. This performance, however, is always open: it might be an affirmation of the official national narrative regarding what this building represents (or rather, what we think it should represent) or a field of competing meanings. The 'monument' usually prioritises a specific performance of memory. As such, it is inactive and immobile, privileging a singular and perpetually stable view of a particular past. In other words, the monument is an object rather than a process, a fact that makes the use of the term inappropriate given the living and constantly in the making, palimpsestuous surfaces of the AP.

The shock that the intervention causes and the reaction it invites emphatically demonstrate the desire to maintain the initial text – i.e. Kaftantzoglou's architecture – intact and pure, in its original visual, material and conceptual state. The neoclassical building is idolised, fetishised and monumentalised to such an extent that every writing – regardless of its aesthetic and/or historic value – is seen as a sign of disrespect which spoils – primarily aesthetically and by extension conceptually and symbolically – the building and what it represents. Even though the graffito is capable of making us rethink the present as well as the past of this place, it is considered preferable to eradicate it in order to eliminate the contingency that a palimpsest-like structure has by nature. The palimpsestuous surface of the AP, contrary to its understanding as 'monument', is active and ever-changing, suggesting a plurality of pasts while remaining open to new inscriptions and significations. It allows weavings among the several inscribed voices and interactions of the different pasts that they suggest. Seen as such, the AP ceases to be a monument and is better understood as a living, everyday place of memory.

Due to the hysterical reactions it caused, the graffito has finally been wiped out on 16.03.2015. The cleaners, however, erased solely the parts of the graffito that occupied the original building – i.e. walls and marble details – while totally ignoring the supplementary elements which it covered (e.g., metal boxes, etc.) **[148]**. This highlights once again that what is at stake is the restoration of the 'original text' in order to secure the fortification of its reading. Once removed, a similar Guernica-like graffiti made its appearance a few meters farther at Patission Street **[149]**. This still remains untouched, thus exposing the importance of the AP and the capacity of its walls to act as palimpsests, challenging the official memory. The removal of the graffito seems to be contradictory for an extra reason: it 'cleans' only the Rector's building – i.e. the one occupied by the Guernica – while leaving all the other surfaces of the AP complex covered with graffiti of various styles, sizes and themes.[242] At the buffing day, a small group of activists unsuccessfully sought to block the cleaning procedure **[150]**. What needs preservation, however, is neither the graffito nor the original image of the edifice but the openness of the palimpsest to new receptions of any kind. In other words, the Guernica and the treatment it invites underline the palimpsestuous character of the surface. It suggests a surface which remains open to antagonism,

to a plurality of voices and re-articulations of the pasts which eventually reshape its – yet to be written – futures.

The graffito was removed as if we detached the two surfaces of the Pad, consigning it to gradually pass to oblivion. Yet, this does not mean it did not leave a trace. What has succeeded in its short life is to force us look at the lowest layer of the Pad where all the impressions are stored. And given that in the current crisis era the traumas and the repressed memories resurface and are magnified, the Guernica plays this role as well: it looks like a magnified microscopic image of a typical Polytechnic wall, depicting the thousand times it was written, erased and overwritten, burned and restored. The graffito is a layer of rage and panic against the current situation which, at the same time, opens a tiny hole that allows us to view the abyssal and complex pasts of the surface. On the violently emptied AP's surfaces we can read all the faded letters of the palimpsest. In its deafening blankness the substrate acquires momentarily its full meaning.

Ultimately, the enigmatic 'Athenian Guernica' leaves one wondering: Is it yet another layer addition in the palimpsestuous Polytechnic surface? Does it try to replicate the palimpsestuous aesthetics of the Polytechnic and, by enlarging its image, make us see and contemplate upon it? Is it an intervention aiming to resurface long forgotten inscriptions and, in so doing, actualise repressed memories? Does it owe its power to its presence there or to the fact that it was forcefully removed? Is this a text, an image or a hieroglyph, that is to say a combination of both? Does it perpetuate or disrupt the flow of images coming from the Polytechnic? Is it an iconoclastic gesture aiming to draw attention to the defaced image so as to shock the public and open a dialogue on and about the Polytechnic's surfaces?


GREECE



3.1. Setting The Scene: Writing In Crisis

The opening image of this chapter shows a wall stained with red and black paint. More precisely, a relatively thick layer of black paint is disrupted by drips of red which are occasionally mixed with the black ones, giving to the picture a spectacular visual result. This 'piece' is characterized by the dramatic splash dripping effect between the letters, making the epigraph look like as if it is bleeding. Undoubtedly, the smeared with paint epigraph 'Greece' dominates the centre of the image and provides the viewer with the first, or rather the sole, hint of context.

When facing this image one is not able to understand where it comes from. Nor one can tell when this paint was casted on the wall and in what occasion. I first encountered this photograph as a header image in an online article related to the Greek debt. However, it didn't name the photographer, let alone providing more contextual information regarding the attacked surface or the event during which it has taken place. The only clue that the close up photograph gives us is the epigraph 'Greece'. It was only after I realised that the font presented was 'Bank Gothic' when I thought that it probably belongs to a bank branch; this would somehow relate the image to the article in which it appeared. My knowledge of the context beyond the photographic frame allowed me narrow down the potential source options and identify that the image is from the Bank of Greece headquarters building in Athens, a place that is continuously targeted during all sorts of marches, due to not only its central location but also the institution that it hosts and its role in contemporary crisis.

The overall impression that the picture gives is that the purpose of these interventions is to attract attention. It is not important what the writings say but what they do to the attached surface, i.e. they change the way it looks. Given that the Bank of Greece building is generally represented untouched from the crisis, this image suggests particular cycles and periodicities as the writings on its surfaces are constantly being removed. The writings destroy the former image of the surface and, in so doing, they produce a new one. Thus, the layers of writing and removal interrupt as well as build upon the previous ones thus transforming the mere accumulation of graffiti into a continuum where different – albeit ephemeral – images of the surface success one another. The architectural surface registers the traces of a perpetual struggle between the equally iconoclastic gestures of defacement and refacement, writing and removal.

3.1.1. 'Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear': Establishing Crisis, Fetishising Violence[243]

Saturday night, 6th of December 2008, Exarcheia district in Athens. A group of teenagers yells at a passing by police car some 'remarks'. The policemen park their car a few meters farther and return armed to the spot to respond to the verbal assault. One of the two policemen takes out his gun and pulls the trigger. Alexandros Grigoropoulos – a 15 year-old boy – drops dead from the gunshot. The incident triggers a youth outburst that lasts for weeks. The riotous protests that follow are the most severe that the country has faced in its post-dictatorial era.

243 Small parts of this section have been previously published in Avramidis, K. (2012). 'Live your Greece in Myths': Reading the Crisis on Athens' Walls. Professional Dreamers, *working paper no.8*. Available at: http://www.professionaldreamers.net/_prowp/wp-content/uploads/Avramides-Reading-the-Crisis-on-Athens-walls-fld.pdf. Accessed: 15 December 2014.

Polemic imagery dominates the visual sphere during and immediately after the 2008 December Uprising. Top: Riot policeman points with gun protesters marching in Syntagma Sq after the assassination of Grigoropoulos. Bottom: A protester threatens a riot policeman with a water pistol during a mass demonstration in front of the police headquarters in Athens. 12.2008.



244
For example, see Economides, S., & Monastiriotis, V. (Eds.). (2009). *The Return of Street Politics? Essays on the December Riots in Greece*. London: Hellenic Observatory, LSE; Schwarz, A. G., & Sagris, T. (Eds.). (2010). *We are an Image from the Future: The Greek Revolt of December 2008*. London: AK Press; Vradis, A., & Dalakoglou, D. (Eds.). (2011). *Revolt and Crisis in Greece: Between a Present yet to Pass and a Future still to Come*. London: AK Press.

The spot where Alexandros Grigoropoulos was assassinated. The toponymic sign of Tzavella St was replaced with one bearing the name of the boy. 12.2008.

151
G09



152
N10
D14



Stencil adapting the motto of the film V for Vendetta to Grigoropoulos assassination date. 12.2008.

245
For more on the 2008 Youth Uprising's stencils see Stavrides, S. (2017). The December 2008 Uprising's Stencil Images in Athens: Writing or Inventing Traces of the Future? In K. Avramidis & M. Tsilimpounidi (Eds.), *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City* (pp. 164-176). London: Routledge.

153
H09

154
J08



Stencil that proliferated on the walls of Athens depicting Alexandros Grigoropoulos. 12.2008.

'No Control' and 'Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear' written on the University building during the 2008 Youth Uprising.

155
J09



For a discussion on the particular slogan see Papanikolaou, M. (2013). Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear!. In *Imagi(ni)ng 'Crisis' Conference: Materialities of Seeing and Representing in the Greek Critical Conjuncture*. Athens: British School at Athens.

246

The Christmas Tree in Syntagma Square on fire. 08.12.2008.

156
N10



PM George Papandreou addresses the nation from the picturesque waterfront of the remote Kastelorizo island. 23.04.2010.

157



Crisis turns to spectacle. Extensive coverage of the Greek crisis and Greek rioting from the foreign media at Syntagma Sq.

158
I04



On 05.05.2010, five days after the bail-out announcement, during the first general strike over the planned austerity measures the demonstration turns extremely violent causing the death of three bank employees inside a bank brach at Stadiou Street.

247

The 2008 Greek Youth Uprising attracted worldwide attention and inspired a wealth of domestic academic commentary mainly focusing on the social conditions that lead to the incident and the role that urban space played in rioting.[244] However, despite these invaluable insights, a symbolic and rather peaceful gesture – compared to the other violent manifestations of youth rage – passed unnoticed. The days following the assassination, citizens gathered at the very spot to share their frustration and anger. They also proceeded to a silent, yet powerful, gesture: they posted a street sign bearing the name of Alexandros Grigoropoulos [151]. They copied the aesthetics of the official street sign, i.e. its characteristic visual and material properties (e.g. same size, colour, font, scale and shape), and by subverting its form, they used it against itself. One would argue that citizens used 'artistic' means for political action and, in so doing, they show how claims can be politically positioned in small gestures. At the same time, pistols – whether physical (real and fake ones) or as representations – enter the visual sphere thus cultivating a polemic image [152].

Apart from the unofficial toponymic change, during and shortly after the 2008 Youth Uprising several stencils proliferated in Athens[245] that had repetitive themes and referred to the events. Two of them were the most visible and emblematic, and one can still encounter some faded traces of them on Athens walls: the one reads 'Remember, remember the 6th of December' [153] while the other was a figurative one that depicted the assassinated boy [154]. On top of the propagation of stencils, politicized wall writers start targeting more central edifices with specific historical, social and political symbolism, such as bank branches or state and institutional buildings. Further, the emblematic slogan 'Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear' makes its appearance for the first time on the walls of the University of Athens building at Panepistimiou Avenue, a gathering point for many protests and the epicentre of several riotous clashes between demonstrators and the police during and after the 2008 'December Events' – as they are often called in a direct reference to the 1944 'December Events' [155]. The scene of the image deserves a short elaboration. The slogan is written with red spray paint on the wall behind the statue of the Patriarch Gregory V of Constantinople. The statue's extended right hand is pointing to the other direction, as if it orders us to stop looking at this disgrace. From the other side another slogan reads 'No Control'. Indeed, the city was out of control for some days during the Uprising. Of course, the slogans were removed shortly after the events. Yet, the 'Merry Crisis' is still considered to be the most iconic slogan of the Uprising, due to its timely character and wide circulation over the internet up until today. Even though Athenians are familiar with anti-systemic wall writing, this slogan is something else: it is the first which referred to the topic 'crisis', thus predicting – or rather inaugurating – a new era.[246] This slogan often accompanies reportages that show images of the Christmas tree in Syntagma Square being on fire [156]. The mediatisation of these images, disseminate and gradually establish the image of crisis in Athens.

The 2008 'December Events' is the prelude of contemporary crisis. Amidst an increasingly financially uncertain and politically unstable situation, on 23 April 2010, PM Georgios Papandreou calls for EU/IMF rescue package addressing the nation from the picturesque waterfront of the remote Kastelorizo island [157]. This can be considered as the 'official' historical marker of the crisis. As of then, the centre of Athens becomes the focal point of the media which start documenting the 'crisis' gradually turning it into a spectacle [158]. Bank branches and other symbols of capitalism are torched during hardcore demonstrations[247] following Greek Government's bail

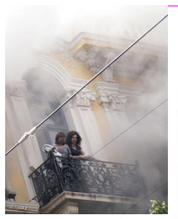
Arguably, the images especially of the paint throwers brings to mind Banksy's over-consumed stencil 'flower bomber' which depicts a demonstrator throwing a bunch of flowers instead of paint, stone or petrol bomb.

159 J07

248

The piece 'Welcome to Athens' by street artist WD in Exarchia district welcomes the visitors of the city with flames, petrol bombs and aggressive images.





A bank branch is torched during a riotous protest in 05.05.2010, a few days after PM Papandreou asks IMF rescue. Three bank employees die in the fire.

Left: Riot policeman hurls projectiles at protesters. Right: Demonstrator cast stones at police. Syntagma Square on 05.05.2010.

160 N10





161 G09

Street artist highlights the damages caused on the marble cladding of a building after the February 2012 mass protest in Athens.

162 K05

163 J02

164 K08



Stencil at Vlahava St by street artist Paul that partially reproduces the suicide note of unionist Savvas Metikidis, who committed a politically motivated suicide on 21.4.2012.



A piece by street artist Bleeps is symbolically placed on the abandoned building of the Social Insurance Institute at Piraeus St shows a man on crutches and reads '& health kaput', referring to the cuts and reforms in the Greek NHS.



249

Vatopoulos, N. (2015). The Aggressive Realism of the Images of Athens. *Kathimerini*, 25 July. Available at: http://www.kathimerini.gr/824908/article/politismos/eikastika/o-epi8etikos-realismos-twn-eikonwn-ths-a8hnas. Accessed: 20 October 2015.

out decisions [159]. Photographs showing protesters casting stones, petrol bombs or paint and riot police forces throwing tear gas become frequent and circulate around the internet,[248] thus distorting the image of what Athens once used to be [160]. Images of violence and destruction – such as damaged urban furniture, closed shops and, of course, graffiti-covered walls – overflow the press establishing an image of decay, while gradually transforming Athens from the cradle of civilization into the cradle of crisis.

The Greek capital is presented deregulated and out of control, unwelcoming and often dangerous [161]. Unemployment creates a 'new poor' generation and this, in turn, leads to a dramatic increase of suicide rates [162]. The economy collapses and the public cuts have overwhelming consequences in several factors of life [163]. Harsh austerity measures trigger violence and the expressed rage against the urban fabric is literally highlighted by graffiti writers [164]. Photographs of destruction and defacement are amalgamated with images of great symbolism related to refacement and beautification. These images represent a turn to what journalist and urban commentator Nikos Vatopoulos has described as "aggressive realism". Interestingly, the header image of Vatopoulos' online article depicts the Bank of Greece headquarters building, the surfaces of which – as we will see later in this chapter – have become very popular photographic frames.[249] It is in this kaleidoscope of images that one can start examining graffiti in the Athens of crisis.

Crisis graffiti has become an extremely fashionable subject in the international news, often accompanying reports concerned with the social meltdown in and urban decay of the Greek capital. In a sense, graffiti and crisis are represented like they have a deterministic association with each other. It is as if the eradication of graffiti will magically lead to the disappearance of the crisis. This given, graffiti images produced amidst crisis must be examined together with the images of their removal. In the case of graffiti, actions and reactions are interwoven. The agents from both sides become partners in a strange relationship of demonstration of power and determination. In this 'game' of defacement and refacement, there are several protagonists: graffiti writers, municipal authorities, institutions, and 'civil society' organisations, to name a few. In this first half of the chapter, I examine the responses to graffiti in the Athens of crisis, both 'official' (e.g., municipal campaigns) and 'activist-based' (e.g., local organisations), as the images they produce demonstrate an attempt to control the 'national imaginary' through visual means and spatial strategies.

3.1.2. 'Clean Walls, Dirty Consciousnesses': Eradicating the Stigma of Crisis

Graffiti is presented enhancing the 'feeling' of crisis and allegedly threatens the image of the city, signifying that Athens, as a capital, and thus Greece as a whole, is out of control, lawless and chaotic. In other words, the presence of graffiti in the city and, especially, the images of graffiti that circulate over the internet signify that Athens is no doubt in crisis, thus not only stigmatizing but also perpetuating the stigmatization of Athens as the capital of crisis.

A careful reading of the images produced and statements circulated from those who seek to manage the Athenian identity, as well as the responses of the graffiti writers towards these attempts are significant here. These battles allow us to see the big picture and understand what is at stake in crisis-ridden Athens, thus facilitating the close examination of the case study later on. To do so, I identify several key moments, events and processes that characterize how crisis is (re)presented and fought in relation to graffiti. The best entry point to the public discourse surrounding these issues is the prefix 're-'. This dominates the discourse and finds its way in almost every rhetorical attempt that justifies specific anti-crisis practices: re-think, re-activate, re-generate, re-establish, and so forth. The 're-' denotes a sense of loss but also an impetus of making something anew.

3.1.2.1. Re-facing the Image: The Murals Project on the Blind Facades of Buildings

Shortly before the signs of urban decay start becoming visible, in June 2010, the Greek Ministry of Environment (YPEKA) along with the Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA) launches the pilot project "Visual Art Interventions in Public Urban Space", i.e. a programme of commissioned murals in Athens city centre. The aim of these interventions is to "reshape and mark the new image of the city centre ... [and] open a dialogue with the spectator".[250] According to the catalogue of the project, emphasis has been given on the symbolic role that the chosen buildings play in the history and image of the city. Another important aspect is how each proposed artwork would potentially interact with its urban context and visual surrounding.

The artistic committee awarded three prizes to three artworks that, by October 2011, have been implemented and since have become integral parts of the Athenian urban iconography. The first artwork is by artist Pavlos Tsakonas who has been awarded the second prize **[165]**. The mural refers to Albrecht Dürer's 'Praying Hands' (1506), but, in this case, the direction of the hands is downwards. As we read in the project handbook, this reversal underlines the sense of loss and decline.[251] The second materialized mural, entitled 'No Signal', is by the artist Panos Sklavenitis who has been awarded the first prize **[166]**. The prophetic 'No Signal' depicts the famous television image and implies a 'blacked out' society which is now forced to give an end to the spectacle.[252] The third wall painting entitled 'The Skein of Life' is a design of Anastasia Kouvari and depicts interwoven colourful skeins on the building surface **[167]**. The first two interventions are diametrically located to the 'entrance points' of the very heart of Athens city centre – close to Omonoia and Syntagma square respectively – which is the main focus of the current study. Except for the last mural which didn't enjoy publicity, these images are depressing and, in a sense, perpetuate the stereotypical image of Athens in decay.

These public artistic interventions are of interest here for three reasons. The first is their contextual positioning in space and time: they are all produced amidst the crisis and two out of

250

Moutsopoulos, T., & Harvalias, G. (Eds.). (2011). *Visual Art Interventions in Public Urban Space: Painting on the Blind Facades of Buildings in Athens*. Athens: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change; Athens School of Fine Arts. [in Greek]. p. 13.



165
I04

The reversed 'Praying Hands' commissioned public intervention by Pavlos Tsakonas at 20 Piraeus St.

Moutsopoulos, T., & Harvalias, G. (Eds.). (2011). *Visual Art Interventions in Public Urban Space: Painting on the Blind Facades of Buildings in Athens*. Athens: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change; Athens School of Fine Arts. [in Greek]. p. 17.



251

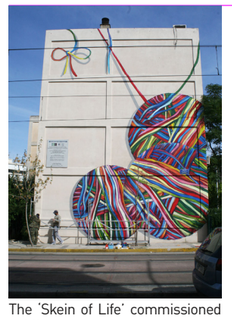
166
M10

The 'No Signal' commissioned public intervention by Panos Sklavenitis at 6 Kriezotou St.

252

Back in 2011, when the 'No Signal' mural was conceived and executed, the artist could not imagine how prophetic his artwork was meant to be. On 11.6.2013, the Greek government, without any prior notice, shuts down the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT), which has seamlessly broadcasting since 1938, and fired all the 2.500 employees of the public company. In June 2015 – exactly two years later – ERT starts broadcasting once again.

167
W04



The 'Skein of Life' commissioned public intervention by Anastasia Kouvari at 4 Freiderikou Smith St.

three murals are located in strategic points at the very centre of the city. The second is the role they play in the visual landscape of Athens. The third is the rationale that engendered them. The objective of this project, as the handbook reveals, is to "stimulate citizens to be active and try to give colour to their building, neighbourhood and city, redefining their relationship with the urban environment".[253] In other words, the programme aims to serve the purpose of civil activation and training: the murals are expected not only to change the image of the city but also to encourage and educate citizens to pay their moral duty keeping their building façades freshly painted, clean and graffiti-free. In a sense, since the authorities cannot stop the proliferation of graffiti, they try to control it.

3.1.2.2. Re-branding the Image: The New Greek Touristic Campaign & the Re-think Athens Competition

In November 2012, the Greek Ministry of Tourism launches a new touristic campaign. In a presentation delivered on 16th November 2012, Minister of Tourism Olga Kefalogianni outlines the main strategic goals of the new campaign.[254] The primary concern is to restore the image of Greece abroad that has become "grey". Greece has to eradicate – or at least hide – the stigma of crisis and become trustworthy once again and, to do so, it needs a new branding strategy with 'Greece' being the main focus.

'Greece: All Time Classic'.[255] This is the new touristic slogan which comes after a few, arguably not very successful, campaigns (2006-2012) to replace the prevailing and catchy slogan 'Live your Myth in Greece' that was inscribed in the national consciousness since its conception and wide use from 2005 until recently [168]. This famous touristic slogan has been reversed into 'Live your Greece in Myth' and it was extensively written on the Athenian walls during the 2011 riotous demonstrations and was widely mediatised [169]. It seems that the Greek Ministry of Tourism anxiously tried to replace this spoiled, stigmatised by the crisis, rhetoric by shifting the emphasis from 'myth' to 'classic'.

The new slogan is powerful both graphically and rhetorically: it is written with a white Times New Roman font over the 'eternal Greek blue', the symbol of Greek-ness par excellence. The presentation on the new branding campaign which was delivered by Nikos Karahalios – the head of the Greek National Tourism Organisation – is based on a 're-' rhetoric. As we read in the statement, the steps that Greece has to follow to achieve its goals are: "re-position, re-think, re-visit, re-structure, re-brand, re-launch, re-empower". After developing several clichés of the Greek rhetoric – such as that Greece is a global symbol, the cradle of western civilization and the birthplace of democracy, fine arts, science and so forth – the presentation of the campaign, among others, mentions:[256]

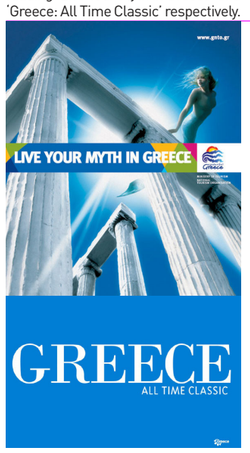
> The image of Greece needs to be cleaned [...] To do so, we need to re-manage our symbols [...] A slogan is not enough during these troubled times of crisis [...] We need a brand narrative of 'Greece' that will work as signature [...] We make classic the brand Greece so as to save it from decay, our history and time give us the right to locate Greece as a classic choice of touristic destination - Greece: All Time Classic.

253 Moutsopoulos, T., & Harvalias, G. (Eds.). (2011). *Visual Art Interventions in Public Urban Space: Painting on the Blind Facades of Buildings in Athens*. Athens: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change; Athens School of Fine Arts. [in Greek]. p. 80.

254 Kefalogianni, O. (2012). Minister's Presentation on Communicational Strategy. *Greek Ministry of Tourism,* 16 November. Available at: http://gnto.gov.gr/sites/default/files/files_article/omilia-ypourgou.doc. Accessed: 20 March 2014. [in Greek].

255 Available at: http://www.gnto.gov.gr/el/01112012-παρουσίαση-της-επικοινωνιακής-στρατηγικής-του-ελληνικού-τουρισμού. Accessed: 20 March 2014.

From top to bottom: Greek Touristic Campaign mottos in 2006 and 2012 reading 'Live Your Myth in Greece' and 'Greece: All Time Classic' respectively. 168

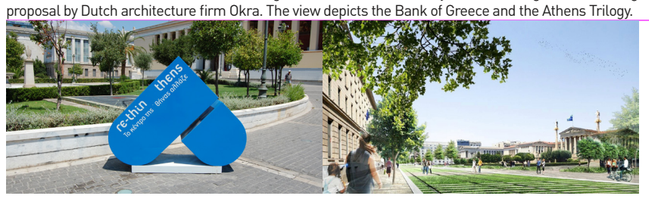


A graffito on a bank branch at Syntagma Sq written on 19.10.2011 reads 'Live your Greece in myth' mocking the famous Greek Tourism motto 'Live your myth in Greece'. 169 N09



256 Karahalios, N. (2012). Presentation of the Communicational Strategy of Greek Tourism. *Greek Ministry of Tourism*, 16 November. Available at: http://gnto.gov.gr/sites/default/files/files_article/GS.pdf. Accessed: 20 March 2014. [in Greek].

Left: Installation of the 'Rethink Athens' logo in front of the University of Athens. Right: The winning proposal by Dutch architecture firm Okra. The view depicts the Bank of Greece and the Athens Trilogy.



170
J09

Stencil at Panepistimiou Ave depicts Professor Tournikiotis mocking his involvement in the Rethink Athens competition. 05.2012.



171
K09

Once again the strategic goal is the eradication of contemporary Greek stigma, i.e. crisis, and to do so the eternal return to the glorious classical past seems to be a one way street. Another emblematic and related project is the 'Rethink Athens' European Architectural Competition.[257] Launched in May 2012, its objective is the pedestrianisation of Panepistimiou Avenue which would allow, as we read in the brief, "the aesthetic and ideological centrality of Athens" to be recovered **[170]**. This competition brought to the fore once again not only the highly symbolic role of Panepistimiou Avenue but also its contested character. Even though the need for interventions are crucial, many oppositional views concerning the intentions behind the competition were raised, claiming that it is a par excellence gentrification project whose purpose is to establish a specific 'clean' image in Athens centre, while attempting to control – and therefore limit – the traditional protest route of city.

Urban writers comment on the competition in their own particular way, most emphatically by targeting the organising committee. A stencil depicting Professor Panayotis Tournikiotis – a prominent architectural historian at the Athens School of Architecture and scientific consultant of the Rethink Athens competition – made its appearance **[171]**. The stencil reads "the brains are like the hair - as you get older, you lose them" and has the rotated Rethink Athens logotype targeting Professor Tournikiotis' brains. The stencil occurred on walls along Panepistimiou Avenue and at the National Technical University of Athens, where Prof Tournikiotis teaches.

3.1.2.3. Re-activating the Image: SynAthina and Atenistas

The 'SynAthina' project is a platform created by the Athens City Council.[258] Its purpose is to encourage, fund and bring together a variety of citizens' movements, initiatives and NGOs. The interests of all these groups range from cultural and artistic to environmental and social issues. According to the online mission statement, the aim of this platform is the following:[259]

> The Athens City Council has created the SynAthina platform so as to support and facilitate the work undertaken by citizens' groups whose actions improve the quality of life in Athens.[...] They may be NGOs, informal groups, or even individual initiatives! The only criterion so as a group to be registered is to show *in practice* that is involved in activities *for the public benefit.*

The variety of the participating groups is vast, as the number of the currently registered groups is nearly sixty.[260] It is an undeniable fact that some of these groups – such as the 'Shedia' team which the Greek equivalent of 'Big Issue' – are characterized by solidarity and inclusivity. There are some other groups, however, whose aims are rather ambiguous and seem to promote a particular dominant agenda in regards to the image of the city. For the purpose of this study I focus on probably the most active group, namely 'Atenistas', whose interventions ignited a social debate. I choose this group because it has a close – albeit polemical – relation to graffiti.[261]

The Atenistas group can be defined as a non-partisan, open community of guerrilla urban activists.[262] Their activities range from charity actions to urban interventions. The latter include cleaning of seafronts and beaches, restorations and/or revitalisations of parks and open spaces, and the scrubbing of graffiti, posters and gums from buildings, signs and sidewalks. Below the bullet points of Atenistas' mission statement:[263]

257 The title of the competition is quite 'catchy' and media attractive. Although the competition is focused on a single street, i.e. Panepistimiou Avenue, it is called 'Rethink Athens'. Panepistimiou Avenue, due to its centrality and symbolic burden, stands for the whole city.

258 The name "SynAthina" is very powerful and deserves a short elaboration. The prefix "Syn-" means "along with" whereas "Athiná" refers to Athena, the mythological goddess of wisdom, the virgin patroness of Athens from which the Parthenon took its name ("Athena Parthenos", i.e. Virgin Athena). The two words together, Syn Athina, refer to the famous proverb "Syn Athina kai Hira Kini", which literally translates "Along with Athena, move your hand too". This means that the Gods will help you only if you help yourself in practice; Athena will give you a helping hand if only you move your own hands. In other words, the proverb means that we should not expect things to just happen but we ought put effort to achieve the goal; it is not enough to pray - Goddess Athena provides her help only to those who show their determination in practice.

259 Emphases added. SynAthina (n.d.). *Mission Statement [Protovoulia]*. Available at: http://www.synathina.gr/πρωτοβουλία/. Accessed: 20 March 2014. [in Greek].

260 According to the SynAthina website, the actions are divided thematically into the following nine categories: Urban Interventions (e.g., Atenistas), Urban Tours (e.g., AtAthens), Solidarity (e.g., Shedia), Networking (e.g., Athens Fringe Network), Education (e.g., Vivliothiki.org), Child (e.g., Playground Group), Environment (e.g., Four Elements) and Culture (e.g., Monumenta). Despite the categorisation, each group has its own agenda and mode of operation. Here, I am interested in those groups that are related to the built environment.

261 Here, I'm not questioning Atenistas right or need to self- organise and act but their claim to represent the Athenian civil society. I'm not critiquing their positions but that they present these as a-political despite the fact that they seem aligned with certain ideologies, mirroring quite evidently governmental views or municipal agendas. I'm critiquing how Atenistas treat graffiti and street art in their projects, i.e. their use of street art's aesthetics as means to add a touch of 'streetness' in the works whilst obliterating graffiti and depoliticising street art.

262 Atenistas' members range from specialized professionals (e.g., architects and designers) – whose main role is to plan and propose actions – to a group of non-specialized individuals – whose basic task is to execute and implement the interventions. Atenistas have several 'expert' groups (e.g., creativa, culture, green, intra, plus, polis) and their interventions are sponsored by private firms and supported by the City Council through the SynAthina platform.

263 The point "We defend entrepreneurship" has been removed from the mission statement without any further explanations. This happened shortly after when people started to question Atenistas' practices. Atenistas (n.d.). *Mission Statement*. Available at: http://atenistas.org/the/. Accessed: 20 March 2014. [in Greek].

We consider the defence of accessibility in public space our strategic goal; We believe in the power of small scale interventions; We respect the law; We are passionate with cleaning; We are next to tourists; We love public transportation and bicycles; We defend entrepreneurship; We are not nostalgic; We raise funds for a good purpose; We identify the positive aspects of our city.

It is clear that their rhetoric is quite powerful and their ambitions high.[264] But couldn't this have been written by municipal officials? Do Atenistas align their practices with Athens municipality's agenda, or do they even try to replace it? Here, it should be noted that Atenistas constantly try to underline the fact that they are not a "partisan organization, a municipal party or an NGO" and seek to build an apolitical image of an organisation whose main goal is to clean and salvage the suffering, ill and decaying urban space of Athens. But how can an urban intervention, regardless of its scale, be an apolitical action? For example, Atenistas 'cleaning parade' on 5th December 2010 – a single day before the second anniversary of Alexis Grigoropoulos death – in Exarcheia district as well as Panepistimiou Avenue – i.e. in the expected areas of political claim-making – raises serious semiological questions and has direct political connotations **[172]**.

It is an undeniable fact that some Atenistas' interventions are aesthetically pleasant. Yet, there is a conflation of ethics and aesthetics here: particular aesthetics are privileged, or rather imposed, over others based on the 'ethical' consideration of the common good. Why such initiatives are promoted whereas graffiti writing is wiped out? What is the difference between these two actions? Someone would agrue that, contrary to graffiti writers, Atenistas 'respect the law', as they claim. But is this really the case? On 19.11.2013, Atenistas while undertaking a cleaning and producing a rainbow-like painting on the public stairwell at Marasli St in the bourgeois Kolonaki district – covering, at the same time, the emblematic slogan 'Clean Walls Equals Dirty Consciousnesses' which was written there – were sued by the neighbourhood's residents for not holding a municipal permission to do so **[173]**. On 22.12.2013, Atenistas secure consent to 'yarn bomb' the trees in the square in front of the Old Parliament building **[174]**.

Graffiti writers and Atenistas might have different starting points but they do share the same end: both impose their aesthetics views and political position on urban space. However, the former are presented as immoral urban destroyers whereas the latter as moral urban beautifiers. These two opposite groups meet on urban surfaces.

3.1.2.4. Re-considering the Image: Aesthetic 'Upgrading' of the Historical Centre

Atenistas' urban practices cannot be seen in isolation. They should be linked with the campaign 'Aesthetic and Functional Upgrading of the Historical Centre' (AFUHC) which was launched on 24.02.2014 under the auspices of Athens Municipality and SynAthina. The campaign included several activities that would ensure the desirable 'aesthetic and functional upgrading' of the Athenian city centre. The plan of action included the cleaning of particular streets from graffiti,[265] the removal of abandoned kiosks and, the creation of another large mural, by way of continuation of the 'Visual Art Interventions in Public Urban Space' project **[175]**.

Athens Deputy Mayor for Sanitation Andreas Varelas – who directs the AFUHC programme – is the first one who disclosed the planned mural on his Facebook page. Muralist Manolis Anastasakos is commissioned to realise the mural which is inspired by Julius Schnorr von

264
Atenistas operate in the name of the "common and public good", on "behalf of the Athenians" and they "call to arms" for a better looking city, by way of an antidote to the decay of crisis. Atenistas publicize their views and present their interventions as if they come from the community. However, their interests and aesthetics are masterly confused with that of the public. By declaring "common good" as their main concern, Atenistas manipulate the limited awareness of the public regarding their interventions and cultivate support, if not legitimation, for their actions. Atenistas are also self-proclaimed as "Athenians in Practice": this is the group's polysemic and ambivalent slogan. In a sense, Atenistas ask Athenians to prove "in practice" that they are Athenians by joining their organisation. In turn, it also implies that, if one is not interested in participating in Atenistas' activities, is either a bad Athenian or not an Athenian at all. It is very interesting to follow not only the visual outcome of their activities but also the rhetoric of their statements. The language used is media attractive, if not professionally journalistic, e.g. "two new pocket parks", "Alice in Petroland", and so forth. Atenistas came into being and gained massive publicity under the enthusiastic support from specific and quite popular free-press newspapers that promote particular lifestyles and agendas.

172
G07


Left: A poster advertising the 'Cleaning Parade' of Atenistas. Right: Atenistas' members cleaning Patision Street on 05.12.2010.

Left: 'Clean walls, dirty consciousness' written on Marasli staircase in 2012. Right: Residents sue Atenistas for their rainbow-like intervention at Marasli staircase in November 2013.



173
K14

A member of Atenistas yarn 'bombs' the trees outside of the Old Parliament on 22.12.2013.

174
L08



The SynAthina headquarters on Athinas Street with its freshly painted graffito on 11.10.2013.

265
Unsurprisingly, the Municipality of Athens, along with the SynAthina activists, started their cleaning operations from their own immediate environment, i.e. Athinas Street. This is where the City Hall is located and few meters away SynAthina has its headquarters. The building was renovated by volunteers in collaboration with architects from the "Imagine the City" group. The building officially opened on 11.10.2013. Ironically, the edifice was decorated with graffiti, but before doing so, SynAthina members cleaned it from its previous illegal graffiti.

175
J05

Today, on one of the two facades remains the only 1980s tobacco advertisement in Athens, while on the other surface is written one of the most iconic contemporary slogans, namely 'Vasanizomai' [I suffer]. This word has proliferated on the walls of Athens since the beginning of the crisis. In fact, it is perhaps the only not violent or anti-systemic slogan that is so closely associated with this troubled era.

266

Junction of Aiolou and Stadiou Streets. Left: The omnipresent 'Vasanizomai' ['I Suffer'] slogan emphatically written on one of the blind façades (2013). Right: The proposed intervention 'Expelled From Eden' by Manolis Anastasakos (2014).



176
I06

Athens Deputy Mayor for Sanitation Andreas Varelas, together with BBC journalist Rajan Datar, clean the graffiti of Ermou Street. ca 08.2012.



267

The whole media appearance brings to mind Tony Blair's famous similar action in Toothill in Swindon in 2006. Interestingly, Athens municipality's effort to eradicate the "eyesore" is based on taste criteria, as Varelas argues in his interview while walking next to Ancient Athenian Agora and other famous touristic destinations of the city centre. Graffiti that are not overtly political or those that do not imply any political message in their representations are preserved, provided that they "aesthetically pleasant". Datar, R. (2012). The Drive to Purge Athens of Graffiti. *BBC Fast Track*, 21 August.

177
L01

268

'[Mayor] Kaminis, Not a Single Wall Will Left Unpainted :)'. Athinas Street on 08.09.2013.



178
M05

The video shows the whole procedure of cleaning an abandoned neoclassical edifice located at the junction of Ermou and Athinas Street, opposite to the touristic Monastiraki Square: municipal workers using pressure hoses to eradicate graffiti, volunteers scrubbing posters, and experts reinforcing the walls with anti-graffiti special emulsions. City of Athens (2013). *Ermou and Athinas*. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=We-5hDaJfYU0. Accessed: 20 March 2014.

269

Demetis, C. (2013). The War between Municipality of Athens and Graffiti Groups. *News 247*, 9 September. [in Greek].



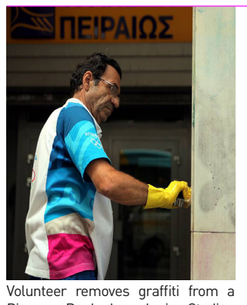
179
N10

The 'laundry' anti-fascist event. Slogan written on the 'laundry' fountain in Syntagma Square reads 'This is how you clean a place'. 22.03.2014.

270

The day chosen for this is event – i.e. on 14.03.2016 the Clean Monday – is symbolically and rhetorically strong, as it associates the way Orthodox believers 'clean' their bodies to prepare themselves for the cathartic Easter with the cleaning of the streets of Athens from graffiti. Together with the cleaning campaign, the Municipality issued a 'Manual of Graffiti Removal' with technical advice on how to easily wipe out graffiti, while highlighting the current legal framework regarding graffiti in Greece. For details see City of Athens (2016). *Manual of Graffiti Removal*. Available at: https://www.cityofathens.gr/sites/default/files/ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΦΑΙΡΕΣΗ ΓΚΡΑΦΙΤΙ.pdf. Accessed: 20 April 2016.

180
M09



Volunteer removes graffiti from a Pireaus Bank branch in Stadiou Street. His shirt is from 2004 Olympics when the city was in its best condition. ca 08.2013.

Carolsfeld's work 'Adam and Eve Expelled from Eden' (1860). This is planned to cover two blind facades a few meters away from Omonoia square.[266] Symbolically positioned in the entrance point of the heart of the city, it could mean that sinners are not welcome in the city **[176]**. Prior to its execution, however, the proposed mural has ignited a social debate due to its religious content and eventually never materialized.

Varelas appears on BBC a few months prior to the launch of the AFUHC in an attempt to show to the whole world how determined the municipality is to fight the "epidemic dimensions" of graffiti that damages Athens' visual identity,[267] making it a synonym of crisis **[177]**. This appearance is linked to one of the most famous and mediatized cleaning campaigns that took place on an edifice at Athinas and Ermou Street on 9th August 2013. During this campaign, Mayor of Athens Yiorgos Kaminis is overseeing the process in an attempt to demonstrate the 'zero tolerance' attitude over the graffiti phenomenon. Mainly neoclassical buildings were cleaned and later that day a video showing the cleaning process of an edifice has been uploaded on the Municipality's YouTube channel.[268] However, the campaign was not left unanswered. The very next day a slogan appeared that read: "Kaminis, no wall will be left untouched" **[178]**. What is interesting is the fact that the slogan was written on the building that was presented in the video as an exemplar case of the campaign; the symbol of determination for graffiti removal. The wall was immediately cleaned and Mayor Kaminis responded to the assault personally through his Facebook page:[269]

> One day after the restoration of the building someone wrote on the newly painted wall the graffiti that you see in the photograph. An hour later it has been removed. Public space belongs to everyone and no one has the right to pollute it, to appropriate it, or to destroy it [...] We will keep removing [such graffiti] until it becomes clear that this type of behaviour is not tolerated by the majority.

All these 'cleaning' actions can be associated to the far-right populist rhetoric about the 'clearance of the nation' **[179]**. The most emblematic moment of this continuous struggle between cleaning strategists and graffiti writers is the Municipal cleanup campaign entitled 'Clean Monday – Clean Athens'.[270] The cleaning took place at the usual 'hotspots', i.e. Ermou Street and Panepistimiou Avenue, and produced images of well-equipped, in-action buffers thus showing that the Municipality has the graffiti phenomenon under control **[180]**. It seems that these cleaning operations constantly seek to eradicate the stigma of crisis and, at the same time, control both the image and imaginary of Athens as it manifests in the city and circulated via the media.

All the aforementioned coupled with the dominant rhetoric, according to which protests, strikes, graffiti or any other sign of resistance practices threat the image of the city, comprise a strategy of erasure and iconoclasm. These practices ought to be eliminated and pass to oblivion, at least at the iconic and symbolic parts of Athens, in favour of the 'proper image' of the country. In this rhetoric, the word 'Greece' and its symbols (e.g., statues, buildings, or even particular streets and areas) are used as brands of a glorious past. Attacking this brand, spoiling its image with signs that evoke crisis and troubled times, is not tolerated. In a sense, today one witnesses quite the opposite compared to what happened during the nation building: from the clearing of the barbaric past, today we witness a cleaning of the repulsive present and an attempt to revive the past, with extra emphasis on its prestigious and pristine image.

3.1.3. 'The New Berlin': The Ambiguous Role of Graffiti in Crisis-ridden Athens



The digital collage 'Hephaestus Temple Graffitied' by artist François Beaurain in 2014.

181
N02

The presence of graffiti in the Athens of crisis is arguably overwhelming; only some ancient structures have been left untouched. The overall image of the city centre is striking especially for the foreigners and this has led some artists from abroad to even imagine how ancient temples would look like covered with contemporary graffiti, mocking the extent of the phenomenon in the crisis-ridden Greek capital [181]. Of course, this unprecedented attention that graffiti enjoys has both positive and negative consequences.

As we've seen in the previous sections, graffiti has dynamically entered the discourse on the decaying image of the city and has been targeted by various citizen groups and municipal campaigns as responsible for this degradation. Also, it became a profitable business for some, thus risking becoming a commodity and losing its power to critically comment on the current state of affairs. For example, Athens Alternative Tours group[271] – along with other walks that are concerned with the night life, architecture, literature and photography in Athens – organises 'Street Art' tourist tours to the unique graffiti-filled streets of Athens. This "colourful journey",[272] as they call it, focuses on the recently gentrified districts of Metaxourgeio and Gazi [182].

For a detailed discussion and critique of this kind of alternative touristic opportunities in Athens see Ioannides, D., Leventis, P., & Petridou, E. (2016). Urban Resistance Tourism Initiatives in Stressed Cities: The Case of Athens. In A. P. Russo & G. Richards (Eds.), *Reinventing the Local in Tourism* (pp. 229-250). Bristol: Channel View Publications.

271



A member of the Athens Alternative Tours team (ATA) showing the graffiti 'beauties' of Athens to tourists.

272

182
I04

A.T.A. (n.d.) *Alternative Tours of Athens: Street Art*. Available at: http://www.atathens.org/tours_streetart1-en.html. Accessed: 10 January 2015.

St.a.co. (n.d.). *Street Art Conservators Athens*. Available at: http://streetartconservators.blogspot.co.uk/. Accessed: 10 January 2015. For more details on the restoration aspects of this project see Chatzidakis, M. (2016). Street Art Conservation in Athens: Critical Conservation in a Time of Crisis. *Studies in Conservation, 61*(2), 17-23.

273

Except for enemies, graffiti's omnipresence in the city centre attracted allies too and even inspired Greek poetry and literature.[273] For instance, the group Street Art Conservators (STACO)[274] – which consists of students from the Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art of the Technological Educational Institute of Athens – is constantly attempting to keep street art pieces in good shape [183]. Despite the paradoxical character of their interventions which is against the ephemeral nature of street art, the mere fact that STACO is a non-profit organisation with genuine interest in the works on the walls of Athens is greatly welcomed from the local graffiti community.

For example see Chiotis, T. (2015a). "Fight Together/Write Together": Street Art as Documentation of Affect in Times of Unrest in Athens. *Journal of Greek Media and Culture, 1*(1), 153–164; Chiotis, T. (Ed.). (2015b). Futures: Poetry of the Greek Crisis. London: Penned in the Margins; Boletsi, M. (2016). From the Subject of the Crisis to the Subject in Crisis: Middle Voice on Greek Walls. *Journal of Greek Media and Culture, 2*(1), 3-28.

274

STACO member restores paste up by street artist Zamie in Psyrri district, in Athens centre.



183
K03

The quality and quantity of graffiti in Athens, coupled with the capacity of these writings not only to reflect and comment upon the situation but also visualise the condition of crisis, has gradually lead to an enormous domestic as well as international media attention and, subsequently, extensive coverage of the phenomenon. This 'blow' in graffiti and street art production, together with the publicity it attracted, gradually established Athens as the 'new Mecca'[275] of the phenomenon in Europe, or the 'new Berlin', as the writers declare on the walls [184]. The title of Athens as the 'European Capital of graffiti' is perpetuated by the media and the artists alike, thus keeping the momentum as well as the graffiti production high. Graffiti, however, is now presented in a positive manner. It is reported to be a 'creative' way through which collective frustration and youth rage is expressed by defacing the image of the city.[276] Or, it is considered to be a form of violence that reflects the financial situation which engendered it.[277]



Athens is the New Berlin' in Stadiou Street by street artist Cacao Rocks in 2017.

275

This is common characterisation from both domestic and international media. For example see Gorou, T. (2014). Athens, the new Mecca of Graffiti. *TVXS*, 12 November. Available at: http://tvxs.gr/news/alles-texnes/athina-i-nea-mekka-gia-gkrafiti. Accessed: 10 January 2016. [in Greek].

184
K08

Henley, J. (2015). Greece's Anti-austerity Murals: Street Art Expresses a Nation's Frustration. *The Guardian*, 4 July.

276

In this context, and given the graphic energy and sharp aesthetics of graffiti, major Greek cultural institutions felt that could capitalise on its 'destructive' power and turn it into something 'constructive'. The day of the 'No Respect' exhibition opening coincides with German Chancellor's short visit in Athens. While the 'consensual' flirtation between graffitists and the authorities is taking place at the exhibition hall of the OCC [185], approximately two kilometres away others march in the city centre while a curfew is in operation to raise their dissenting voices, resulting to the defacement of the 'temple' of capitalism, i.e. the Bank of Greece headquarters building. There, a slogan appears that interacts with the specific situation: 'Hey Old Man, Where are you

277

Kirkpatrick, N. (2015). Greece's Financial Crisis as Told by the Graffiti on its Walls. *The Washington Post*, 30 June.

The 'No Respect' exhibition opening at the Onassis Cultural Centre on 11.04.2014.



185
Z01



'Old Man, Where Are You Going With Your Horse? Curfew is in Operation' written on the Bank of Greece HQ on 11.04.2014.

Theodoros Kolokotronis was a Greek army general, a heroic leader of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottomans, also known with the nickname 'The Old Man of the Moria'.



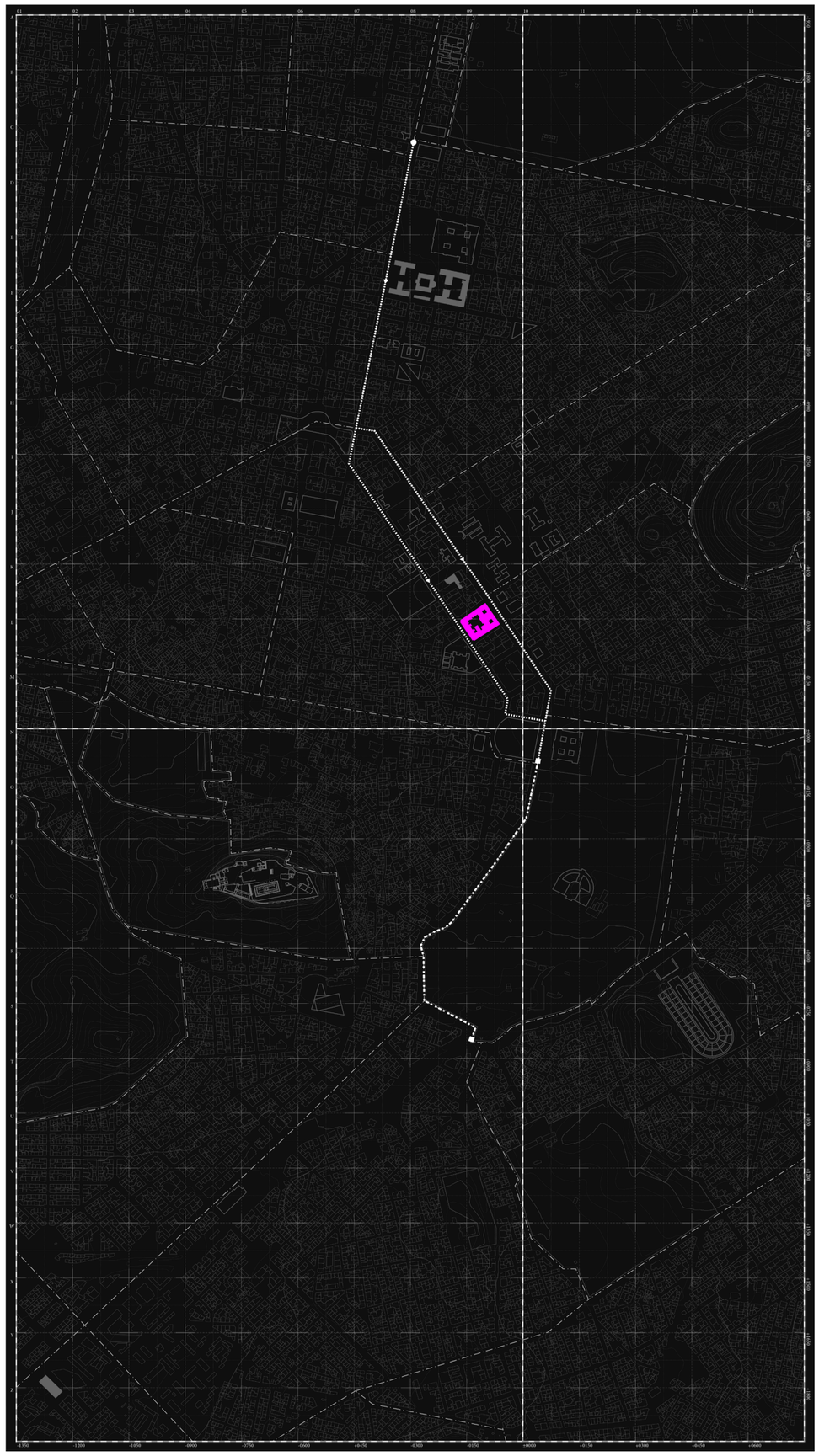
'IMF Out - Theodoris' written o Theodoros Kolokotronis statue at Stadiou Street opposite to the Bank of Greece on 11.04.2014.

186
L08

278

187
L08

going with your horse? A curfew is in operation' [186]. This wall writing, despite being clever and humoristic, it is also context-sensitive. The 'Old Man'[278] refers to Theodoros Kolokotronis' statue that is located just opposite to the Bank of Greece at Stadiou Street [187]. The capacity of this type of writing to reflect the topicality that engendered it, as well as my observation that this targeting is intentional and recurring lead me to study in more details the writings on this particular edifice, while following the perpetual struggle between its defacement and refacement. It is only in this specific domain of images and socio-political situation that one can examine these writings and their meanings.



3.2. Bank Of Greece: Iconoclastic Gestures[279]

Primary observations from Athens' walls suggest that neoclassical buildings are now the main targets of urban writers. By foregrounding the iconographic and topographic role of national imagination in the current state of crisis, this section discusses how this intentional positioning of graffiti spoils the 'image of Greece' that is symbolically embedded in the particular architectural style. The perpetual writing and removal of graffiti on specific edifices suggests cycles and periodicities and reflects the current state of affairs. I use Bruno Latour's concept of "iconoclash" to examine the underlying urge of the production and destruction of these images as well as to expose the context-dependent meaning of these marginal image 'wars' in Athens. Building upon Ella Chmielewska's context-sensitive analysis of urban writing[280] and Rafael Schacter's theoretical treatment of graffiti and iconoclash,[281] I attempt a close examination of politicized writings in their spatio-temporal context. To do so, I use the marks on the Bank of Greece (henceforth BoG) historical building in the centre of Athens as a case study. The BoG headquarters building is the image of the institution; it thus needs to convey power and authority. The architectural vocabulary adopted, the materials used, and the position of the building in the urban fabric, along with their special, heavily symbolic meanings in the Athenian context, dictate the meaning of the marks that occupy it and are analyzed in greater detail below.

3.2.1. The Image of an Institution: Writing on a 'Successful Façade'

The BoG is founded in 1927 and begins operating on the 15 May 1928.[282] It is responsible for the Greek national monetary policy and had the exclusive right to issue banknotes until the Eurozone's creation in 2002. According to Maastricht Treaty, the BoG is a member of the central banking system which is comprised by the EU countries and the ECB. In the headquarters of BoG, the Greek financial, credit and currency policies are formed, and the national gold reserves are stored and managed.

Prior moving to its current building at 21 Panepistimiou Avenue, the BoG had its headquarters at a neoclassical building just a few meters farther (40 Panepistimiou Avenue), where currently the National Mortgage Bank is settled. The new headquarters building is erected in four stages - it underwent several extensions throughout the 20th century to become the massive, in terms of scale, building that is today occupying a whole building block. During the first phase, the building develops primarily on Panepistimiou Avenue. Two extensions are added after WWII at Homer and Edward Law Street and another one during the 1970s towards Stadium Ave. In 1982 an extra storey is added and in 1989 the headquarters of the BoG became a listed building.

Immediately after its foundation, the BoG starts the preparations in order to move to a 'suitable' building in a 'proper' location, by purchasing land and launching a relevant architectural competition in 1929. The competition brief, apart from some programmatic and technical requirements for the building, dictates not only the construction materials but also its future appearance and aesthetics. Thomas Markus and Deborah Cameron, in their book *Words between the Spaces* which examines – among others – how design guides and briefs affect architectural

281 Large parts of this section have been published in Avramidis, K. (2015). Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens. *The Design Journal, 18*(4), 513-534.

280 Chmielewska, E. (2007). Framing [Con]text: Graffiti and Place. *Space and Culture, 10*(2), 145-169.

279 Schacter, R. (2008). An Ethnography of Iconoclash: An Investigation into the Production, Consumption and Destruction of Street-art in London. *Journal of Material Culture, 13*(1), 35-61.

282 Bank of Greece (1978). *The First Fifty Years of the Bank of Greece (1928 - 1978)* . Athens: Bank of Greece. [in Greek]. pp. 64-79.

production and perception, argue that "a building's users may never see any of the documents which preceded its construction, but because those documents condition the architect's decisions, their contents profoundly affect how the building will be experienced and used".[283] The texts that precede a building not only designate but also reveal the expectations invested in it.

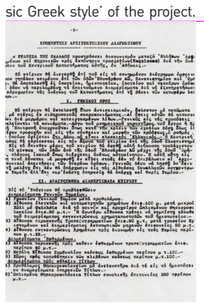
In the very first lines of the five page-long competition brief the following requirements appear [188]: "Due to the monumental character of the project, the Competition Committee, when judging the proposals, will pay special attention to the synthesis and form of the façades, which should follow a classic Greek stylistic vocabulary". It is important to note that the underlines which appear in the archival document highlight the following two points: 'monumental character' and 'classic Greek'. The competition, despite the large number of entries from the most important Greek architects of the interwar period, proved to be fruitless [189]. Except for honourable mentions, no prizes are awarded.[284] Markus and Cameron assert that "the question always constrains the answer...In the domain of architecture, the 'question' is in the text(s) that preceded a building; the building is an 'answer' to that question".[285] It seems that the 'question' posed by the BoG in the brief did not find a convincing 'answer'. This is "due to the lack of a premium design, a good functional plan that responds to a definitely successful façade", as the bank reported.[286] The keyword here is 'successful'. What does 'successful façade' mean? The submitted proposals are judged based on what the building's façade would convey. The façade should not only be successful but 'definitely successful' - with double emphasis. The primary concern of the BoG is the image of the building, its 'successful façade'; the functional aspects are secondary .

In 1930, the BoG commissioned the design of the building to the architects Konstantinos Papadakis and Nikolaos Zoumboulides [190] who served as director and technical advisor respectively at the Bank's newly established Real Estate department. The BoG's central building, in architectural terms, is governed by the principles of neoclassicism which, along with classical academicism, at that time are the dominant styles of public architecture in Athens.[287] Despite its massive scale and rich interior, it uses a simple, monolithic and austere stylistic vocabulary at the exterior. Emmanouil Tsouderos – who was the Governor of the BoG in 1938 and later served as a Greek PM –[288] during the opening ceremony of the new building, states that "the façade of the new palace reveals the character of the Institution".[289] Here, this specific architectural form needs to express the institutional principles: the building symbolizes and speaks for the institution. The institution and its building are conflated; they both have to fulfil a moral purpose and carry out the mission "to cure contemporary needs".[290]

Dimitres Philippides, a prominent historian of Greek architecture, notes that the façade of "the Bank of Greece building imitates that of the Old Palace [Greek Parliament]",[291] designed by the Bavarian architect Friedrich von Gärtner in 1836, approximately 100 years earlier. Perhaps, this is what the BoG's management board termed as "successful": a symbolic resemblance, or rather equation, with power [191]. Architectural form is transformed into an ideological device: the institutional, as well as national, beliefs are embedded in and stem from the architectural style chosen. It seems that graffiting the Bank of Greece is equated to graffiting the Greek Parliament.[292] The BoG is therefore considered to be the 'next best thing', given that the Parliament building is fortified, impossible to reach and therefore to write on.

283
Markus, T., & Cameron, D. (2001). *The Words between the Spaces: Buildings and Language.* London: Routledge. p. 14.

188
Dictating the form. The first page of the architectural competition call asks architects to pay attention to the 'monumental character' and 'classic Greek style' of the project.



189 K09

Two competition entries. Left: Proposal by famous architect Ioannis Despotopoulos. Right: A 'classical Greek' proposal by an unidentified architect (nickname 'Sfaira').

284
Amongst the architects who participated in the competition are the following: E. Lazarides, I. Despotopoulos, K. Laskaris, D. Tripodakis, L. Bonis, and B. Kassandras. The majority of the submitted proposals followed the 'classical Greek style' to meet the requirements of the brief, yet did so with the introduction of a more modern architectural ethos. For more details see Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings.* Athens: Bank of Greece. [in Greek]. pp. 108-119.

285
Markus, T., & Cameron, D. (2001). *The Words between the Spaces: Buildings and Language*. London: Routledge. p. 68.

Bank of Greece (1978). *The First Fifty Years of the Bank of Greece (1928 - 1978).* Athens: Bank of Greece. [in Greek]. p. 165.

286

190 K09
BoG's architects are particularly interested in the way that the main (east) façade of the building looks like and give special attention to the design of its portico.



287
For more details on the dominant architectural styles of the period and the ways they affected the BoG HQ building's appearance see Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings*. Athens: Bank of Greece. [in Greek]. pp. 58-62.

288
Emmanouil Tsouderos is not the sole example of exchange between the BoG and the Greek Parliament. There is a constant movement of high profile personnel between these two institutions (and buildings) in contemporary Greek history. Before or after playing a key role in the BoG, several members held prestigious political positions. Two recent examples include, Lucas Papademos who prior to his short service as PM of the provisional Greek government (November 2011-May 2012) has been the Governor of the BoG for nearly a decade, and Yannis Stournaras who has been the Greek Minister of Finance (2012-2014) and as of 2014 is the Governor of the BoG.

289
Venezis, I. (1955). *The Chronicle of the Bank of Greece*. Athens: Greek Publishing Corporation. [in Greek]. p. 208.


Top: The main (west) façade of the Greek Parliament at Vasillisis Amalias Avenue. Bottom: The imitation of power. The main (east) façade of the BoG at Panepistimiou Avenue.

290
Venezis, I. (1955). *The Chronicle of the Bank of Greece*. Athens: Greek Publishing Corporation. [in Greek]. p. 208.

291
Philippides, D. (1984). *Neohellenic Architecture: Architectural Theory and Practice (1830-1980) as a Reflection of the Ideological Choices of Neohellenic Culture*. Athens: Mellisa [in Greek]. p. 240. See also the entry 'Bank of Greece' in the 'Greek Contemporary Monuments Database'. Available at: http://www.eie.gr/archaeologia/gr/arxeio_more.aspx?id=184. Accessed: 22 January 2015.

191 N10

292
For a detailed discussion on the history and form of the Greek Parliament see Kardamitsi-Adami, M., Katsota, D., Ampatzi, E., Vlassopoulou, M., & Karapanou, A. (Eds.). (2009). *The Building of the Greek Parliament: From the Old Palace of Athens to the Greek Parliament Building.* Athens: Greek Parliament. [in Greek].

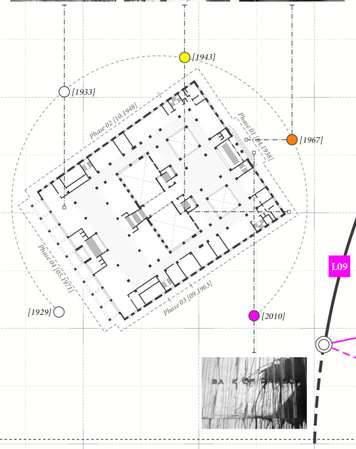
3.2.2-01. BoG Urban Context [1:2000]

'The Bank and its palace are oeuvres that meet the dominant expectations of our era; they are designated to cure contemporary needs... Both incorporate the new spirit and represent these ideas. Inspire hope and ground the faith for a fuller life in a new era of evolution, culture and progress' (Venezis, 1955:207).

'Here lost their lives, during the mass protest of the Athenians against the visions of the Bulgarian fascists, on 22 7 1943, the EPON members Panagiota Stathopoulou, 17-years old, Thomas Hatzithomas, 20- years old, Koula Lili, 19- years old, who confronted unarmed Hitler's tanks.'

'Long Live the 21st of April'. This date is symbolic as it was then, in 1967, that the Military Coup took place abolishing democracy and established the Junta, also known as the Regime of the Colonels, that lasted for seven years. Democracy restored in 1974, few months after the Polytecnic Uprising.



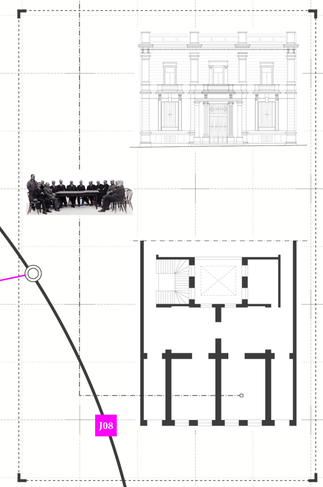


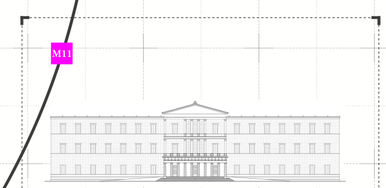
'Except for honourable mentions, no prizes are awarded. This is due to the lack of a premium design, a good functional plan that corresponds to a definitely successful façade' (BoG, 1978:165).

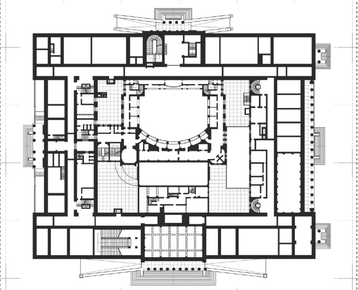
'Our new palace took its place amongst the brightest complex of public buildings in the capital ... it should not disturb the rhythm and physiognomy of the bright historical institutions with which it has the fortune to be neighbour' (Venezis, 1955:208).

'The façade of the Bank of Greece imitates that of the Greek Parliament, designed by the Bavarian architect Friedrich von Gärtner a hundred years earlier' (Philippides, 1984:240).

'The new building should be an eternal jewel of the city ... a palace that cannot be subaltern to the surrounding buildings ... since the aesthetics standards of contemporary Greeks cannot expected to be lower than that of those one hundread years ago' (Kardamitsi-Adami, 2011: 57).







Athens Polytechnic

Athens Trilogy

Space of Historical Memory

Bank of Greece

Old Parliament

Greek Parliament

Former Bank of Greece [40 Panepistimiou Ave] – Ground Floor Plan & Elevation

Bank of Greece [32 Panepistimiou Ave] – Ground Floor Plan

Bank of Greece [Omonoia Square] [~300m]

Bank of Greece [Greek Parliament] [~300m]

Bank of Greece [Athens Trilogy] [~150m]

Greek Parliament [2 Vasilisis Amalias Ave] – Ground Floor Plan & Elevation

E07 E08 J08 J09 K08 KL L09 OM PR KO SY M11

Bank of Greece
Former Bank of Greece
Key Sites [K4; AP]
Key Buildings [Demolished]
Key Buildings [Financial]
Key Buildings [State]
AA Square Initials
A00 Locational Index
Zoom In
Protest Gathering Point
Demostration Route
Detention Route
Index Line
Conceptual Displacement
Physical Displacement

3.2.3. Athenian Neoclassicism: Writing over the Aesthetic Principles of a Nation

Philologist and folk scholar Alexis Politis, uses a striking metaphor that links the emergence and widespread usage of katharévousa – the official language of the newborn Greek state in the early 19th-century – with the ideologies of the image of the Athenian built environment. Politis argues that neoclassicism, as an architectural vocabulary that integrates elements inspired by the classical era, massively prevails in Athens and resembles the dominant trend in formal language to add ancient suffixes to words in order to make them sound archaic.[293] Neoclassicism is of interest here not only as an aesthetic choice that largely defined the physiognomy of Athens' city centre, especially of Panepistimiou Avenue, but also as an ideological mechanism contributing to the formation, crystallisation and homogenisation of national and bourgeois urban identity.

The dominance of neoclassicism in Athens is far from accidental. Neoclassical architecture had two competitive advantages: it provided a visual sense of Greek-ness, by celebrating the classical architectural elements in a city that is in search of national identity, and, at the same time, bears similarities with the modern Western capitals, distancing itself from the Ottoman past. Despite the fact that this architectural movement is thriving in the West during the 19th-century, the migration of neoclassicism to Athens is quite unique. What distinguishes the Athenian case is not the development of an innovative style but the conviction that neoclassicism has its origins in Athens and thus it is not a foreign import but, as the urban planning historian Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis argues, "a counterloan".[294] According to the architectural historian Eleni Bastea, neoclassical architecture is celebrated "as a uniquely Greek creation".[295] Most of the important public buildings in Athens in the 19th- and early 20th-centuries, including the BoG, are built in neoclassical style and accumulated in the main axes of the capital so as to convey the "the symbolic and cultural image that Athens sought to establish".[296] This neoclassical image privileges certain visions of the past by clearing out whatever could threaten the dominant cultural and national rhetoric. It is within this historical context that neoclassicism has been gradually fetishised by the Greek population and subsequently becomes the target of Athenian wall writers [192].

293 Politis, A. (1993). *Romantic Years: Ideologies and Attitudes in Greece, 1830-1880*. Athens: EMNE, Mnemon. [in Greek]. p. 85.

294 Hastaoglou-Martinidis, V. (1995). City Form and National Identity: Urban Designs in Nineteenth-Century Greece. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies, 13*(1), 99-123. p. 104.

295 Bastea, E. (2000). *The Creation of Modern Athens: Planning the Myth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 148.

296 Bastea, E. (2000). *The Creation of Modern Athens: Planning the Myth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 149.

192
C07



The function and form of particular buildings seem to make them prone to graffiti. The the neoclassical HQ building of the Panhellenic Unionists Organisation (GSEE) defaced. ca 12.2010.

3.2.4. Athenian Marble: Writing on the 'Noblest of Materials'

The BoG and the Greek Parliament buildings bear remarkable similarities not only in terms of architectural style but also in the use of construction materials: they are both built with the famous Pentelikon marble and Piraiki stone [193]. The former, especially, is a symbol of wealth and classical status.

Kress and van Leeuwen argue that materials play an important role as signifiers and owe their meaning to the context in which they are produced and perceived.[297] To illustrate their point, Kress and van Leeuwen use precious metals as an example. They believe that what is considered precious in a specific period and region is not necessarily the case elsewhere. The preciousness of a metal does not only have to do with its scarcity or physical properties, but also with the meaning and signification that specific people in a particular spatiotemporal context attach to it. Writing on a bricked or pure white marble wall, creates a considerably different visual affect; concurrently, different cultures invest different meanings in each material. For example, in Athens the marble wall is not just a traditional material used for buildings' façades, but also a heavily loaded semiotic feature that refers to the classical past of the city.

In his marble 'bible', written as early as 1909, William G. Renwick asserts that "marble was the medium for the greatest height of artistic expression in ancient Greece. The buildings that yet remain at Athens ... are instances of the expression of the highest artistic feeling, executed in the noblest of materials".[298] The keyword here is "noble". It is not this material's undeniable endurance over time that is of concern here. Nor are the qualities of the material per se mentioned, highlighted and valuated, but rather, what is significant is the fact that marble was used by an ancient – idealized in western thought and mythologized in Greek national consciousness – civilization to produce masterpieces. This projected idealised perception of the past is what gives value to marble and makes it "noble". This is especially true for Pentelicon marble which was used in the construction of the Acropolis[299] and several other celebrated architectural and sculptural masterpieces in classical Greece, bearing extraordinary, almost mythical, symbolism [194]. The Pentelicon marble deposits of the ancient quarry of Mount Pentelicus in Attica remained undisturbed for centuries and reopened in 1834 to provide the construction material for the erection of the Greek Parliament building and later for several other governmental or institutional buildings, such as the famous "Athenian Trilogy". The latter – due to its image and historical importance in the Athenian context – has also attracted many writings in the recent years [195].

193
Z00

The well-known ancient stone quarry in Pireaus.



297

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design. London: Routledge. p. 217.

298

Renwick, W.G. (1909). *Marble and Marble Working*. New York, NY: D. Van Nostrand Company. p. 19.

299

For more details on the relationship of Pentelicon marble quarries with the construction of the Parthenon see Korres, M. (1995). *From Pentelicon to the Parthenon: The Ancient Quarries and the Story of a Half-worked Column Capital of the First Marble Parthenon* (D. Turner, W. Phelps, Trans.). Athens: Melissa.

194
A00

The famous ancient marble quarry of Mt Pentelicus.



195
K09



Writing on the noblest of materials. 'Resist' on the Academy of Athens building (part of the neoclassical trilogy) in 2011.

3.2.5. Panepistimiou Avenue: Writing in the Greek 'Capital'

Emmanouil Tsouderos, during the opening ceremony of the new headquarters building mentioned in a previous subsection, did not omit to highlight the determinant role of the building's strategic positioning: "our palace took its place amongst the brightest complex of public buildings of the capital ... it ought not to disturb the rhythm and physiognomy of the bright historical institutions with which it has the fortune to be neighbour".[300] Due to the Bank's proximity with the aforementioned neoclassical masterpieces, archaeologist Antonios Keramopoulos – a well known intellectual of the time – asked for a building that would be an "eternal jewel of the city", a palace that could not be "subaltern, in terms of aesthetics, compared to the surrounding buildings", since "the aesthetics standards of contemporary Greeks cannot and should not be subordinate to those 100 years ago".[301] Architects had the moral responsibility to meet the national standards due to the location of the building and its proximity with the 'Athenian Trilogy' **[196]**. It is also important to note here that along Panepistimiou Avenue are concentrated some of most prestigious buildings of Athens – including the Catholic Church, the Arsakeio School (today State Council), the archaeologist's Schliemann residency Palace (today Numismatic Museum), among other – the vast majority of which follows the neoclassical architectural style **[197]**. Today, Panepistimou Avenue has the largest number of listed historical monuments, compared to any other street in the capital.

The imposing BoG headquarters building dominates the street, or rather competes with its surrounding for domination. It is an iconic building but not in the contemporary use of the term which mainly refers to structures that dominate urban skylines, such as 'the Shard' or 'the Gherkin' in London. Rather, it is iconic due to its scale, materials and placement in the specific Athenian context. Further, it owes a large part of its significance to its function and the institution that it represents.

Nowadays, Panepistimiou Avenue is full of symbols of nation, authority and capitalism. Moving along the avenue, one is surrounded by prestigious façades of institutional buildings with rich facings, statues, national flags, toponymic signs that bear heroic names, and global brands. One cannot overlook the close relationship of property ownership with the politics of the image of the street. It must be underlined here that most of the emblematic and prestigious buildings along Panepistimiou Avenue, upon which politicized graffiti often occurs, belong to banks.[302] The historical map of banks in Greece is complex and constantly changing, characterized by several acquisitions, mergers, and re-namings. Yet, the amount of assets at Panepistimiou Avenue that belong to banks has significantly increased over the last two centuries, resulting in an accumulation of properties at the hands of a few financial institutions. Today, several banks have their headquarters across the avenue, while there are at least three whole building blocks belonging to financial institutions (among them is the BoG). In other words, it is the place where the Greek 'capital' dwells **[198]**.

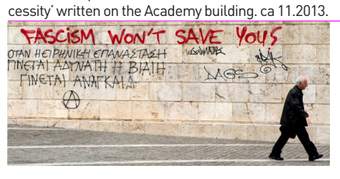
Panepistimiou Avenue, due to its strategic location, linking the working class Omonoia Square with the bourgeois Syntagma Square, bears yet another layer of symbolism for the Greek society: that of collective civil claims. From the 2008 Greek Youth Uprising up to date, Panepistimiou Avenue became the stage for numerous peaceful rallies as well as the battlefield of several riotous demonstrations that further affected the hybrid political image of the street, where the prevailing national image encounters its opposition.

300 Venezis, I. (1955). *The Chronicle of the Bank of Greece*. Athens: Greek Publishing Corporation. [in Greek]. p. 208.

301 Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings*. Athens: Bank of Greece. [in Greek]. p. 57.

Athenian Trilogy's buildings are prone to graffiti. 'Fascism won't save you!', 'When peaceful revolution becomes impossible, then violence becomes Necessity' written on the Academy building. ca 11.2013.

196
K09



197
J08



The Council of State building defaced during the 2008 Youth Uprising.

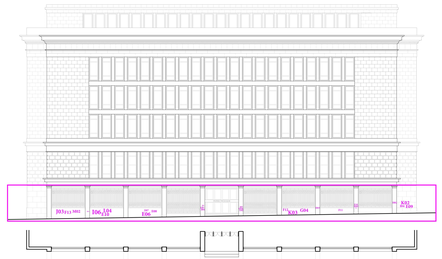
302 The author contacted the Greek National Cadastre and Mapping Agency S.A. – the responsible organisation for mapping property ownership in Greece – in order to acquire primary data concerning the land ownership at Panepistimiou Avenue. According to their official response, the mapping of Athens city centre is still in progress and this information is unavailable. The data regarding property ownership is from the article Rigopoulos, D. (2012). The Architectural Capital of Athens. *Kathimerini*, 26 February. [in Greek].

The Greek Morgage Bank (former Bank of Greece headquarters) fully covered with graffiti. ca 01.2013.

198
J08




C06
F14
C02
I03
1000
1000
1000



[08.12.2008] *Assassination of 15-year old Alexandros Grigoropoulos by Police Officers, Triggering Widespread Protests in Several Weeks' Duration Against Conservative Government.*

[13.04.2010] *PM George Papandreou Calls For EU/IMF Rescue Package.*

[10.05.2010] **Sat 8: 48h General Strike and Rioting Demonstrations Against IMF Rescue Package.**
Ath. Syntagma
Ath. Syntagma
Ath. Syntagma

Writing Set No: A

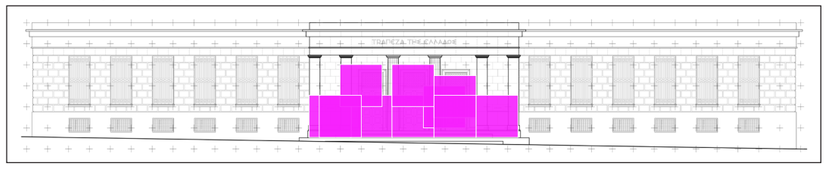
Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010
Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

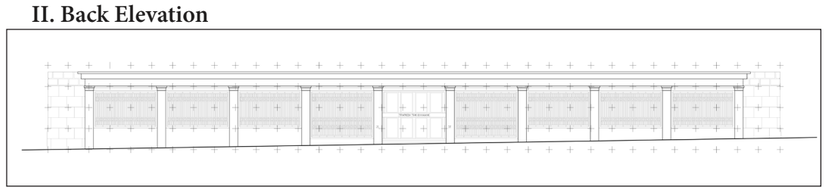
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010
Event Nature: 48H GENERAL STRIKE AND RIOTOUS DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST IMF RESCUE PACKAGE.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: B

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010
Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

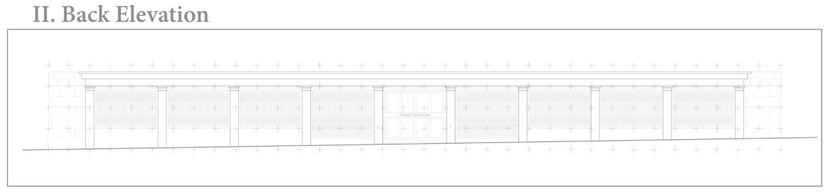
Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010
Event Nature: LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS AHEAD OF NEW SOCIAL POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT.

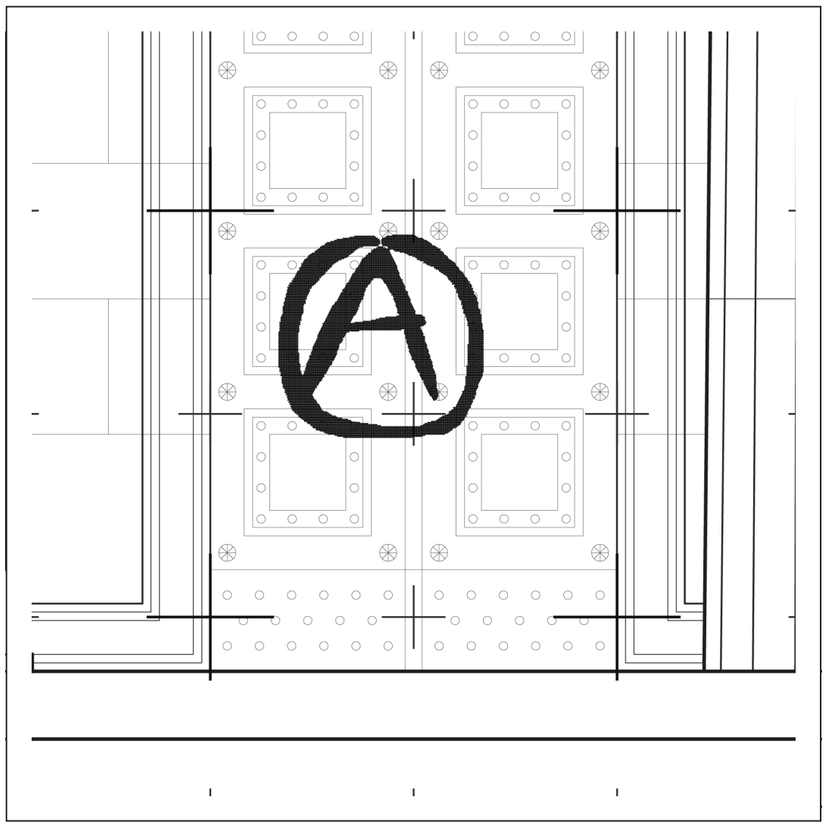
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #A01



Writing Serial No: #001



Text

Reads: Encircled 'A'

[Standing For 'Anarchy']

Image

Date Taken: 05 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: Police run in front of the Bank of Greece headquarters with a slogan reading 'Down with IMF' on its wall during a massive demonstration to protest the austerity measures. Police fired tear gas on youths as marchers swarmed through central Athens to protest unprecedented austerity.

Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Golden Wood

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ16 – ζ18

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Police run in front of the Bank of Greece

Elevation



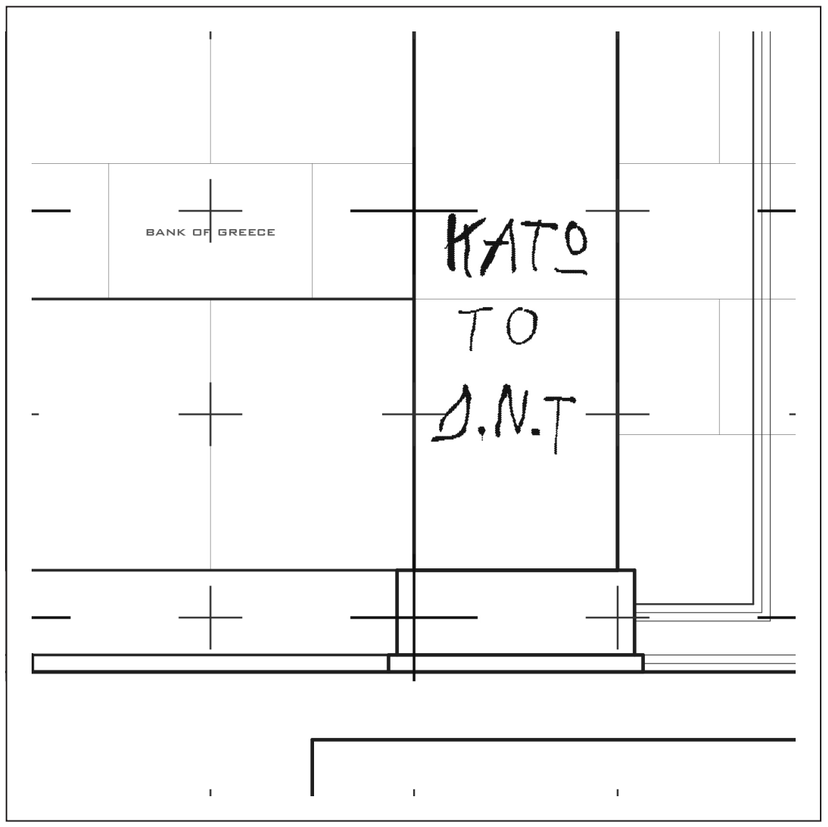
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zntxtft Last Visit: 30 | 03 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A02



Writing Serial No: #002



Text

Reads: IMF Out

[ΚΑΤΩ ΤΟ ΔΝΤ]

Image

Date Taken: 05 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: A man sits outside the Bank of Greece during a May Day rally in Athens May 5, 2010. The graffiti reads, "IMF out"

Photographer: Yiorgos Karahalis (Reuters)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ15 – ζ17

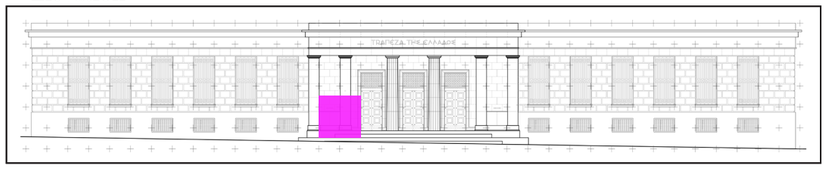
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 06 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Losing faith in the euro zone?

Elevation



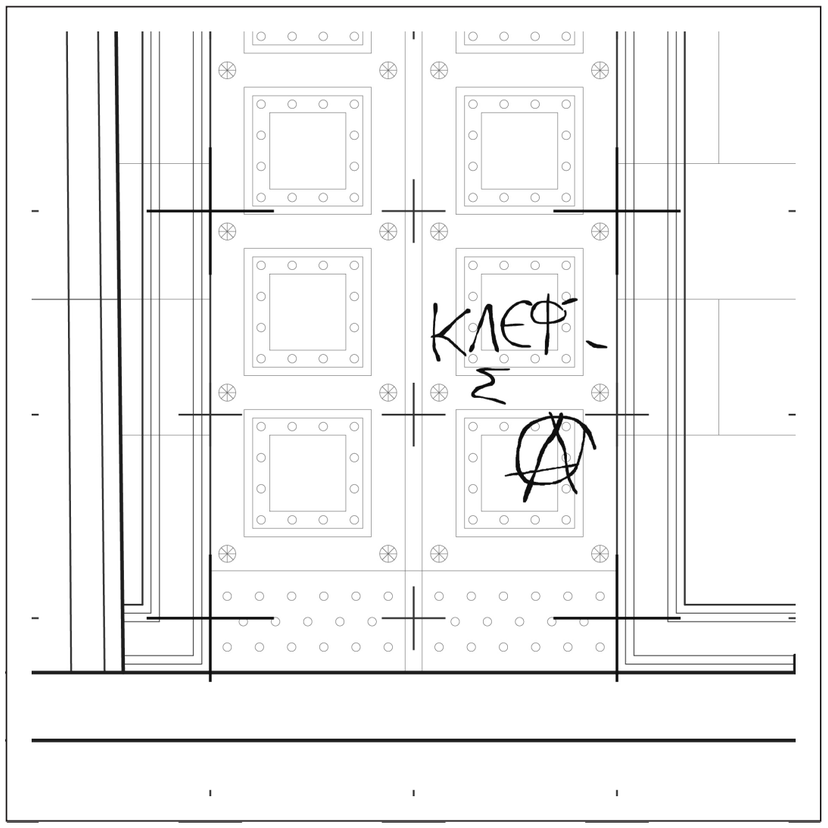
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zrk6plq Last Visit: 09 | 05 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A03



Writing Serial No: #003



Text

Reads: Thieves 'A'

[ΚΛΕΦΤΕΣ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 05 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: The EU has criticised credit ratings agencies over their approach to the Greek debt crisis, and underlined its own support for the bailout plan.

Photographer: Aris Messins (AFP/Getty)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Golden Door

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ20 – ζ22

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 28 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Greece debt crisis: The role of credit rating agencies

Elevation



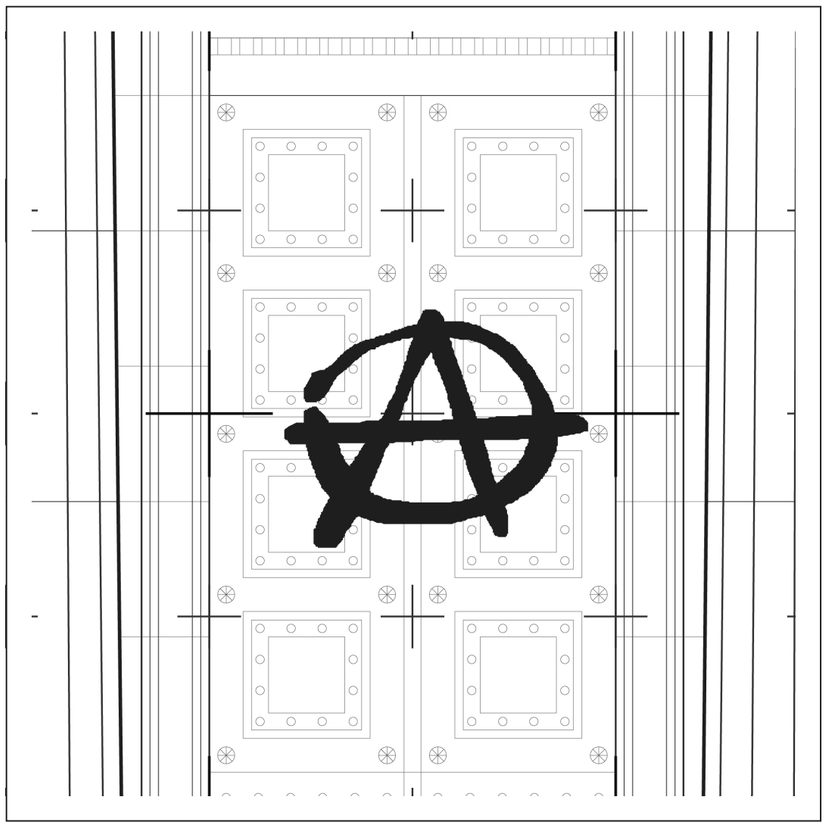
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hw9w9wc Last Visit: 22 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A04



Writing Serial No: #004



Text

Reads: Encircled 'A'
[Standing For 'Anarchy']

Image

Date Taken: 05 | 05 | 2010
Image Caption: A man pears out from the door of the Bank of Greece marked with an A for anarchy during a demonstration in Athens. Police charged the crowd with tear gas and made 21 arrests.
Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Black Acrylic Paint
Surface: Golden Door

Duration

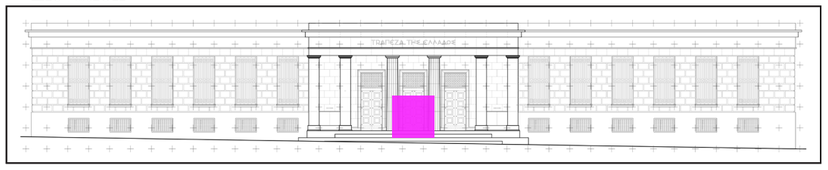
Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010
Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ18 – ζ20

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 28 | 10 | 2010
Post Title: A man pears out from the door

Elevation

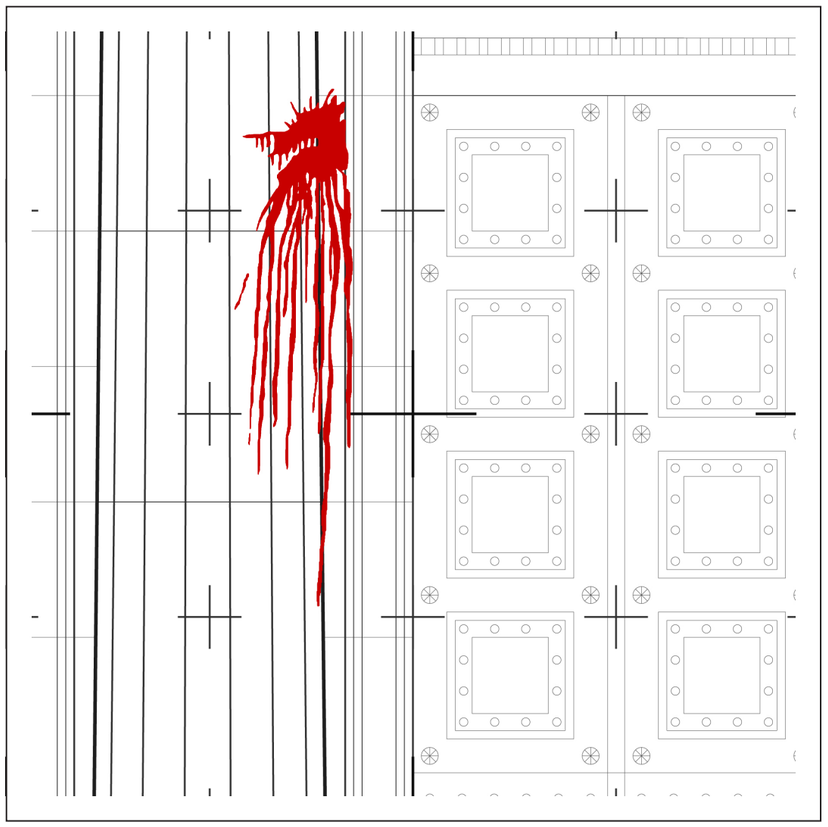


Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010
Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jtymaxu Last Visit: 24 | 10 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A05



Writing Serial No: #005



Text

Reads: _____

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: Workers clean the front of the Greek National Bank on May 6, 2010 in Athens. Three people, one of them a pregnant woman, were killed when Greeks protesting against government austerity measures threw petrol bombs at a bank.

Photographer: Milos Bicanski (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ20 – ζ22

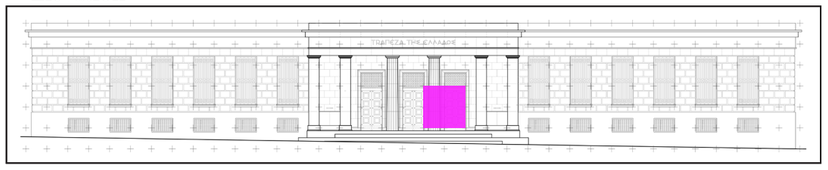
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Further Demonstrations As Greek Government Debates Austerity Measures.

Elevation



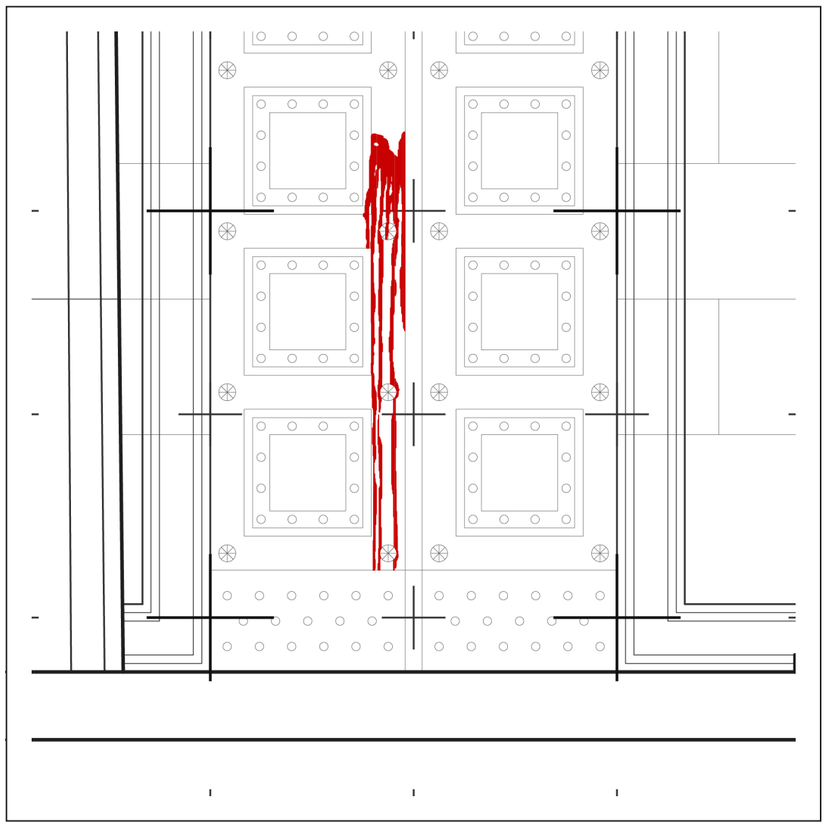
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48H general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hmlpbjs Last Visit: 18 | 12 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A06



Writing Serial No: #006



Text

Reads: ---------

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: Bank of Greece

Photographer: ---------

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Golden Wood

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ20 – ζ22

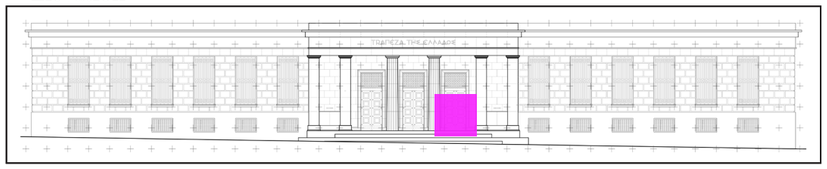
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 05 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Syntagma an hour ago: No Hope! [Σύνταγμα: πριν μια ώρα: Καμία Ελπίδα!]

Elevation



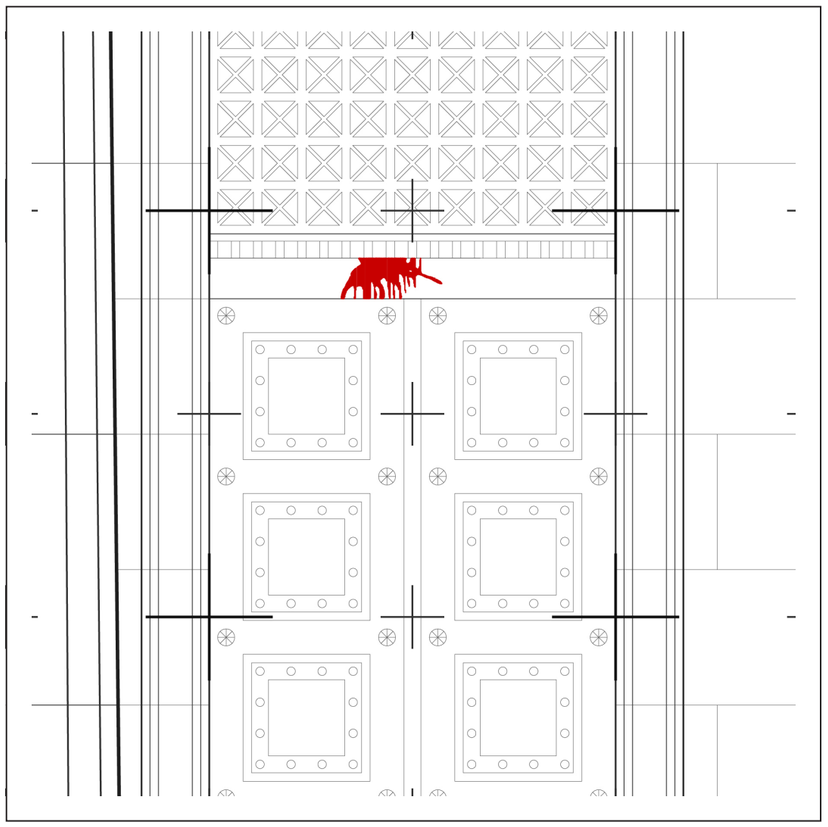
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

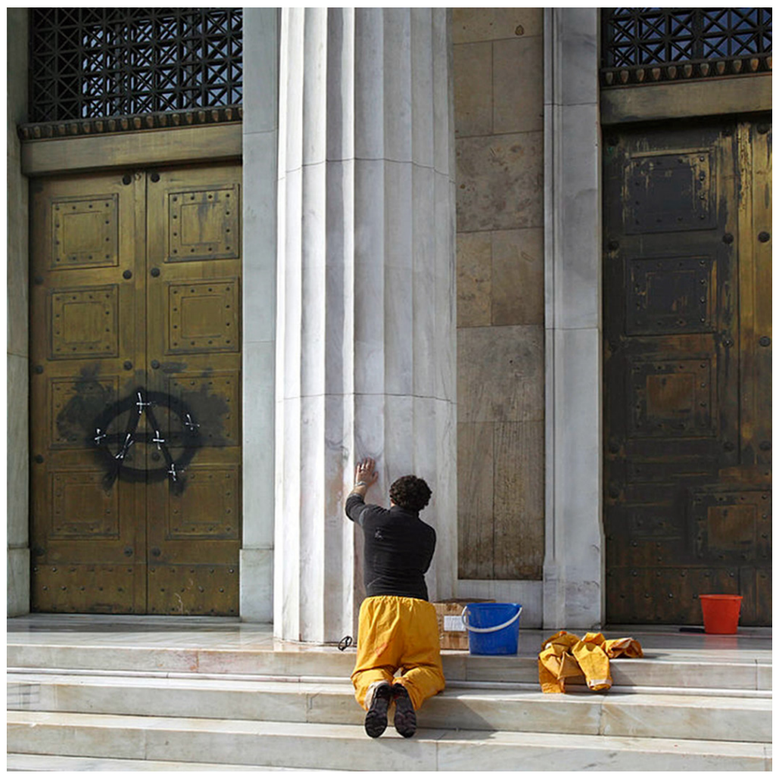
Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/o5nk8gg Last Visit: 17 | 06 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A07



Writing Serial No: #007



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: A worker removes graffiti from the central bank of Greece in Athens, Greece, on May 6, 2010. European Union finance ministers will discuss next week whether any Greek bailout should be funded by issuing EU bonds guaranteed by euro region governments.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Golden Wood

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-γ20 – ε22

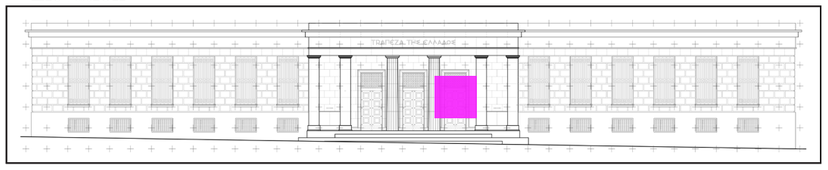
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Greece Faces Budget Cuts

Elevation



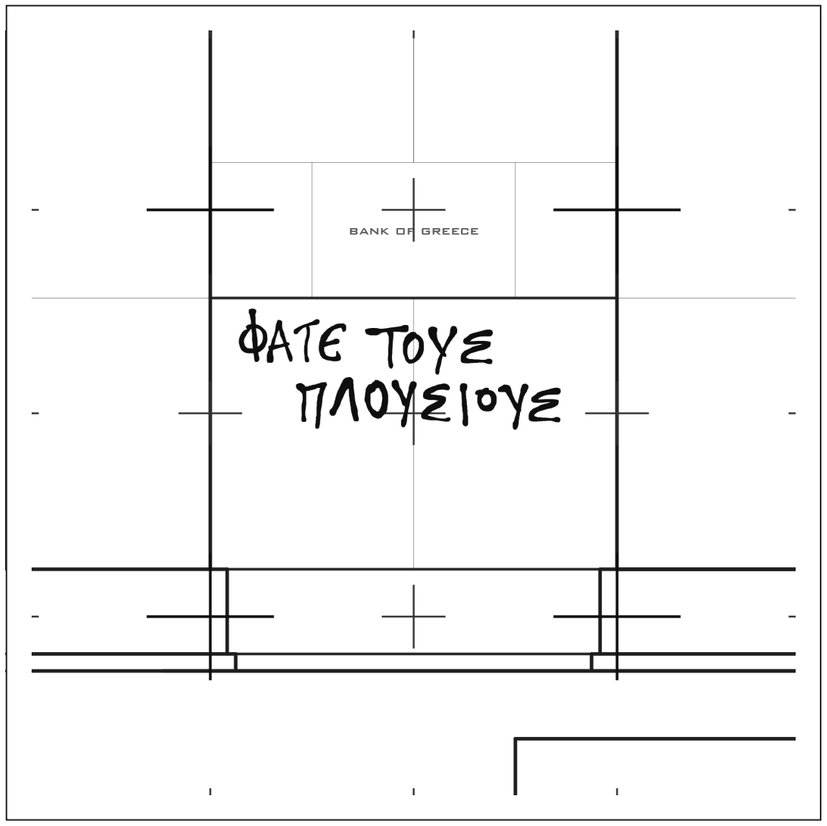
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hpwjrad Last Visit: 11 | 02 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A08



Writing Serial No: #008



Text

Reads: Eat the Rich

[ΦΑΤΕ ΤΟΥΣ ΠΛΟΥΣΙΟΥΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: Bank of Greece

Photographer: Lampis Papadopoulos

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

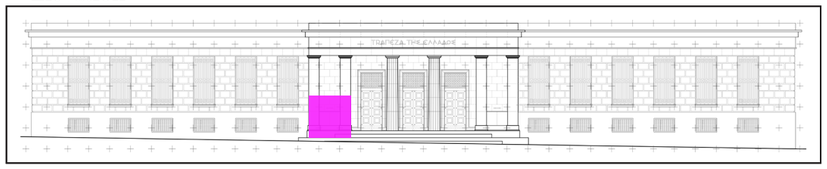
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 31 | 12 | 2010

Post Title: How The Greeks Exorcises The Memorandum: Poor in Cash, Rich in Humor

Elevation



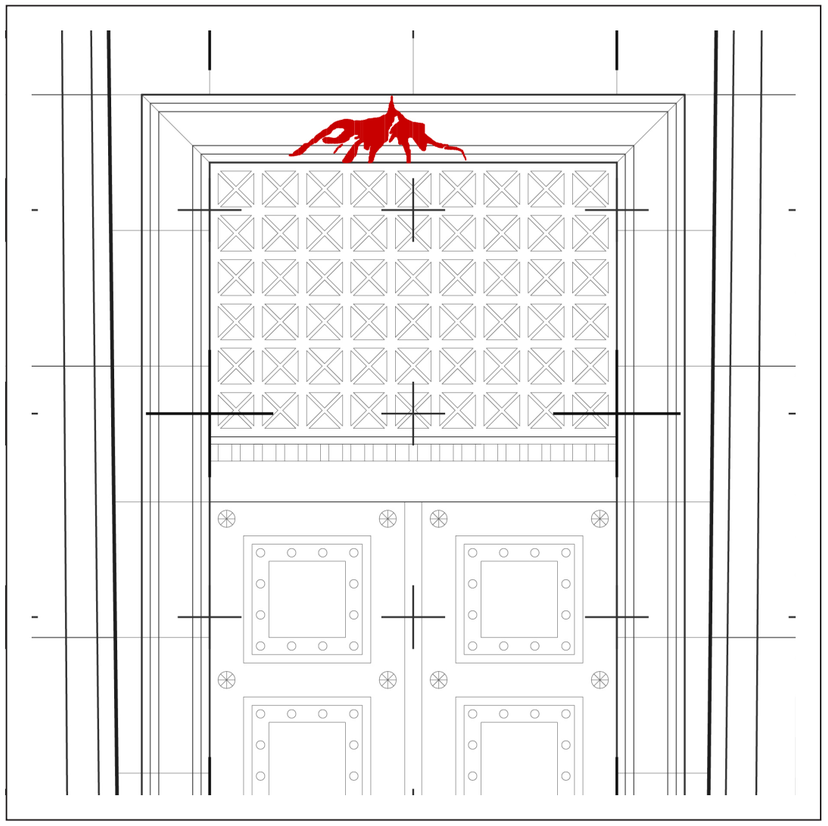
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

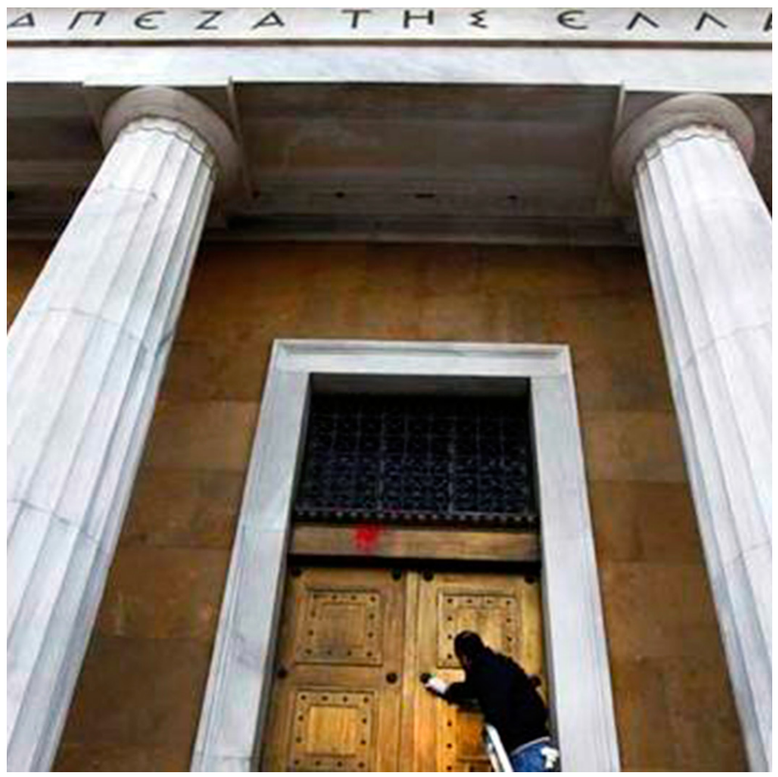
Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gkwtx2c Last Visit: 08 | 01 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A09



Writing Serial No: #0099



Text

Reads: ---

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: A worker cleans paint thrown by anti-austerity protesters at the facade of the Bank of Greece in central Athens. Bondholders have agreed to take steep losses on their holdings, keeping the country afloat for now.

Photographer: Yannis Behrakis (Reuters)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Golden Wood

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-γ18 – ε20

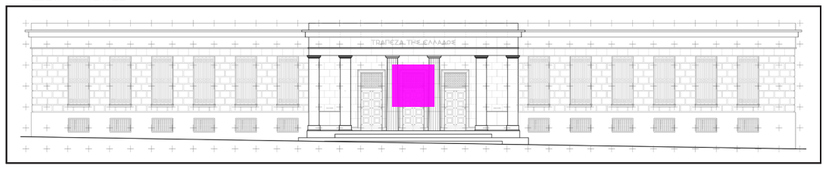
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 09 | 03 | 2012

Post Title: Greece gets bondholders' support, staving off default.

Elevation



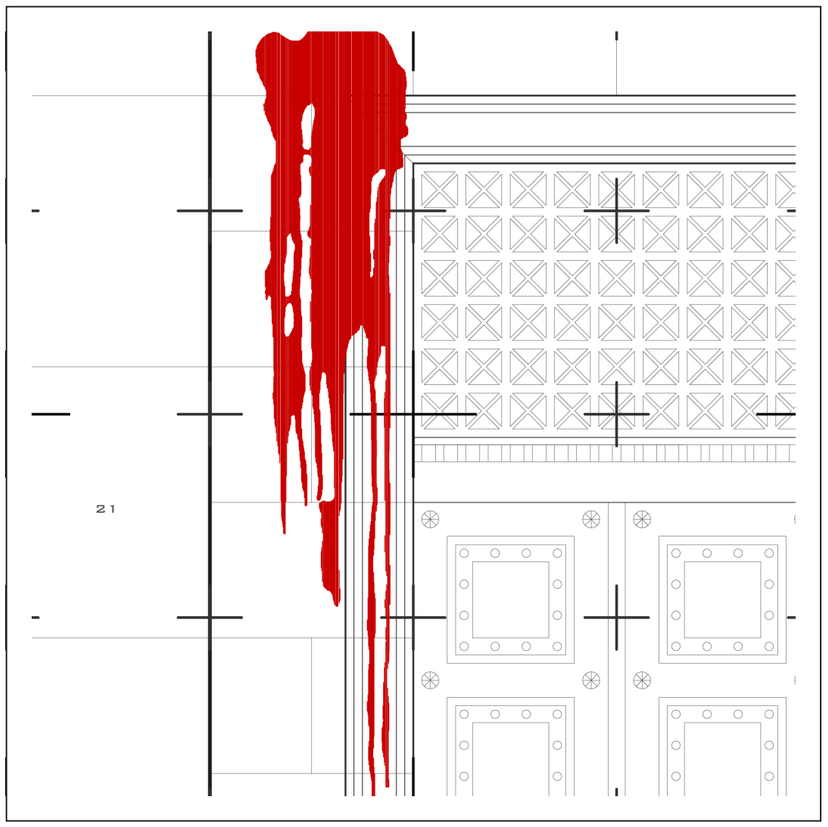
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hckps8y Last Visit: 04 | 10 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A10



Writing Serial No: #010



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 05 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: The Bank of Greece has denied it has asked the European Central Bank for an emergency transfusion of €3 billion to the Greek banking system through the Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) mechanism.

Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP Photo)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-γ16 – ε18

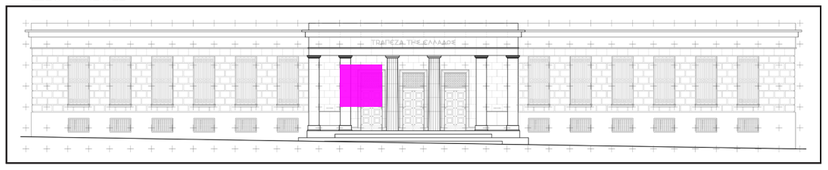
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 18 | 06 | 2015

Post Title: Bank of Greece denies asking ECB for €3 bln emergency fund transfusion

Elevation



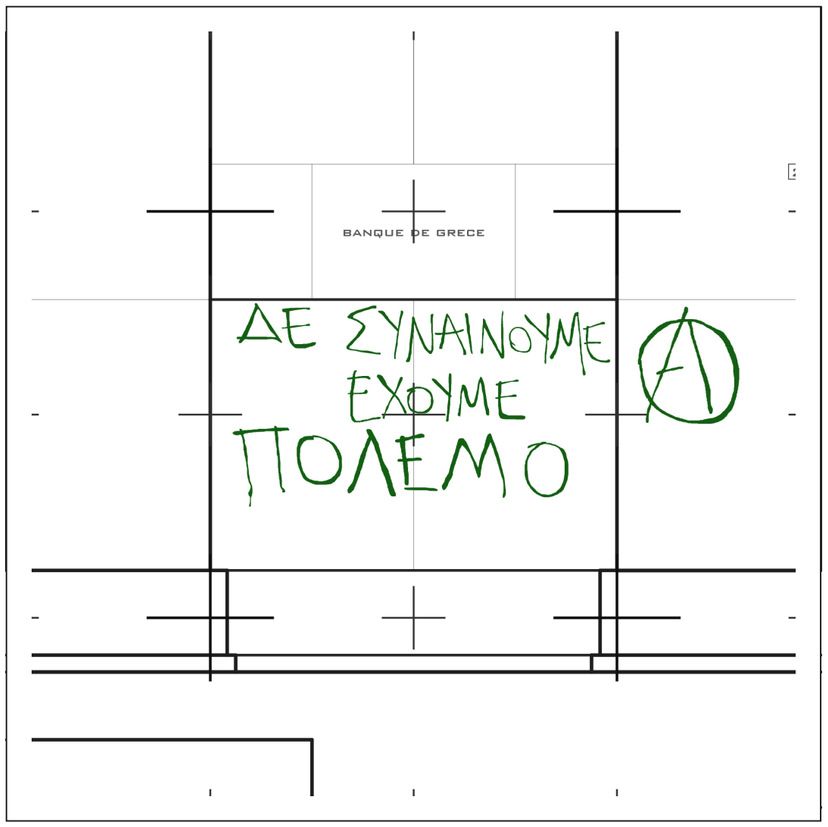
Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

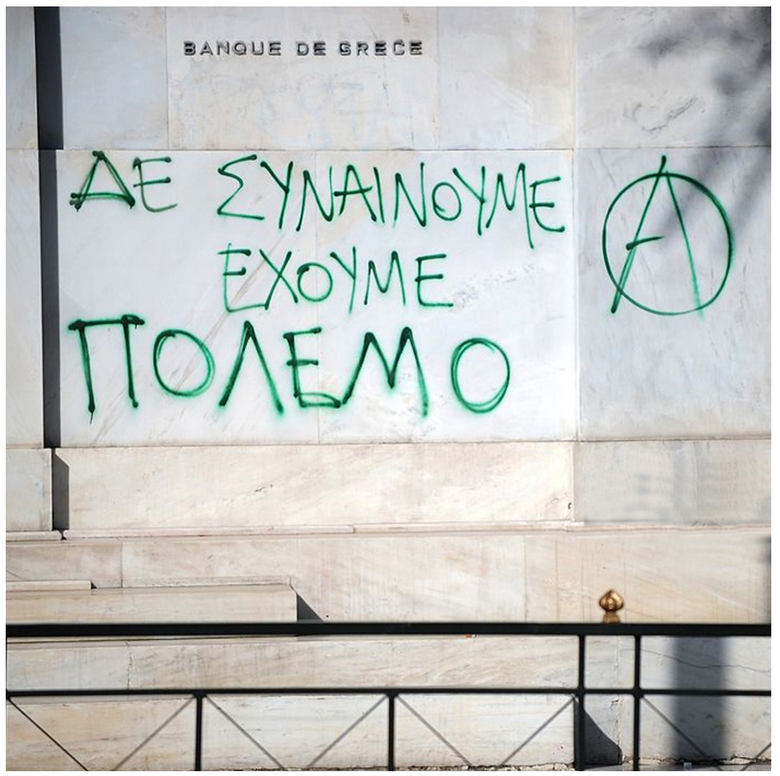
Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zgn5gmb Last Visit: 18 | 09 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #A11



Writing Serial No: #011



Text

Reads: We Do Not Agree - We Have War 'A'

[ΔΕ ΣΥΝΑΙΝΟΥΜΕ ΕΧΟΥΜΕ ΠΟΛΕΜΟ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 05 | 05 | 2010

Image Caption: A man takes a rest outside the Bank of Greece in downtown Athens next to a slogan reading 'We do not agree - We have war'. Greece plans new budget cuts of 30 billion € over three years with the aim of slashing the public deficit to less than three percent of output by 2014.

Photographer: Dimitar Dilkoff (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Green Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Grid Location: I-ε23 – ζ25

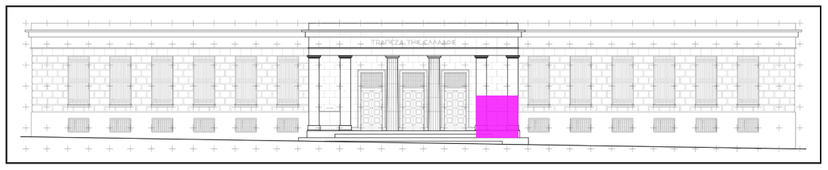
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 05 | 2010

Post Title: Greek PM meets opposition in new bid for consensus

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010

Event Nature: 48h general strike and riotous demonstrations against IMF rescue package.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hsacq2o Last Visit: 17 | 04 | 2013

Writing Set No: A

Duration

Writing Date: 05 | 05 | 2010
Erasure Date: 06 | 05 | 2010

Event

Event Date: 05 | 05 | 2010
Event Nature: 48H GENERAL STRIKE AND RIOTOUS DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST IMF RESCUE PACKAGE.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation

Writing Set No: B

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010
Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

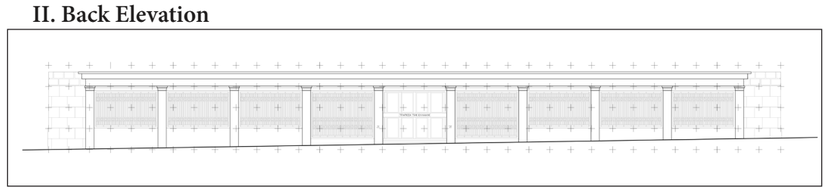
Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010
Event Nature: LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS AHEAD OF NEW SOCIAL POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT.

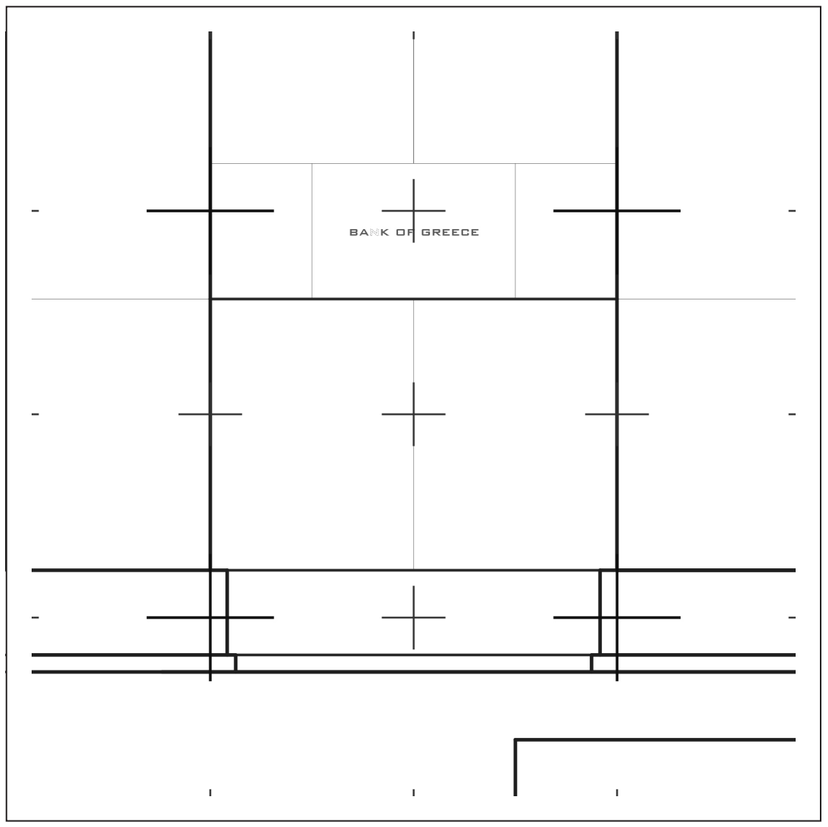
I. Front Elevation



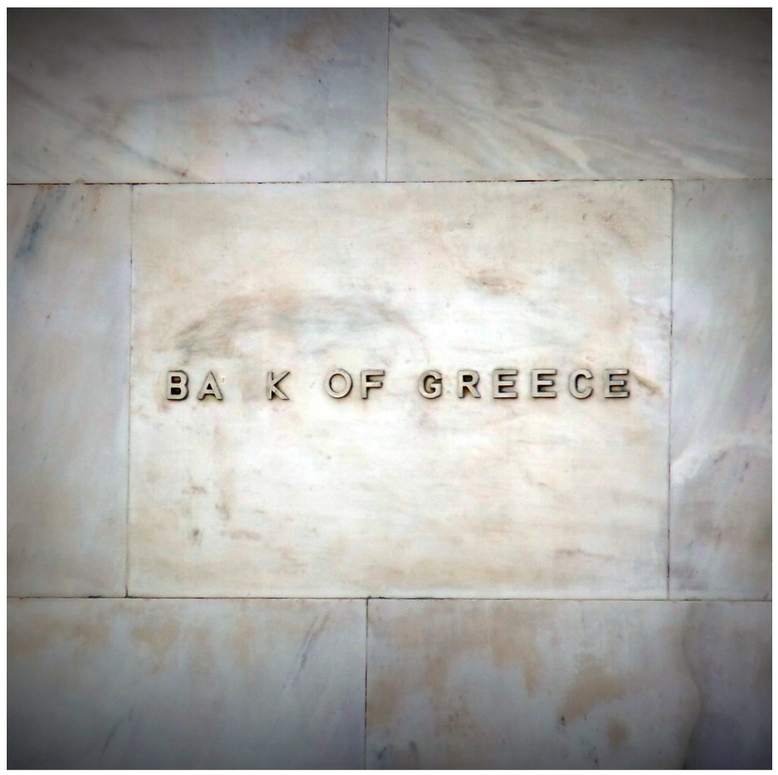
II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #B01



Writing Serial No: #012



Text

Reads: Ba k of Greece ('N' Letter Removed From Epigraph)

Image

Date Taken: 19 | 10 | 2010

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: Stan Jourdan

Writing

Tool: Human Hands

Substance: --------

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

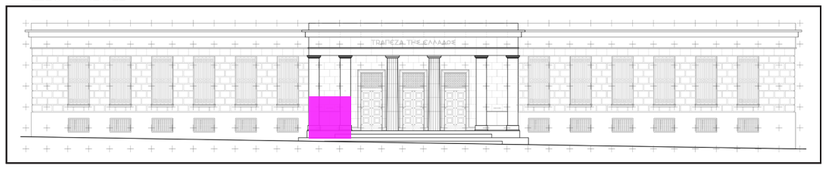
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 28 | 10 | 2010

Post Title: On the Central Bank's building in Athens.

Elevation



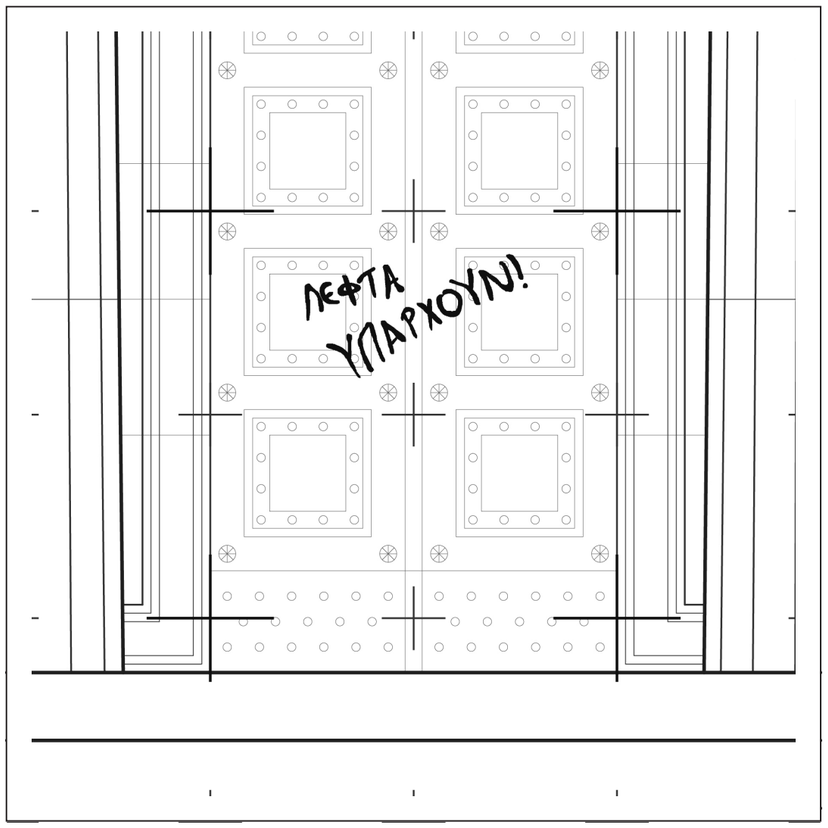
Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Event Nature: Large demonstrations ahead of new social policy announcement.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nf3yvwd Last Visit: 07 | 02 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #B02



Writing Serial No: #013



Text

Reads: There Is Money!

[ΛΕΦΤΑ ΥΠΑΡΧΟΥΝ!]

Image

Date Taken: 20 | 10 | 2010

Image Caption: A pedestrian wearing a face mask passes the doors of the Greek central bank daubed with the slogan 'We have money' during the second day of a national strike in central Athens, Greece, on Thursday, Oct. 20, 2010.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Golden Wood

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ18 – ζ20

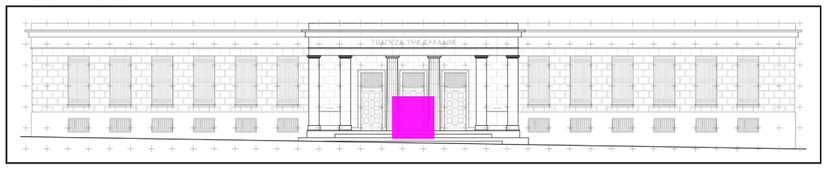
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 21 | 10 | 2010

Post Title: Athens General Strike And Stock Exchange.

Elevation



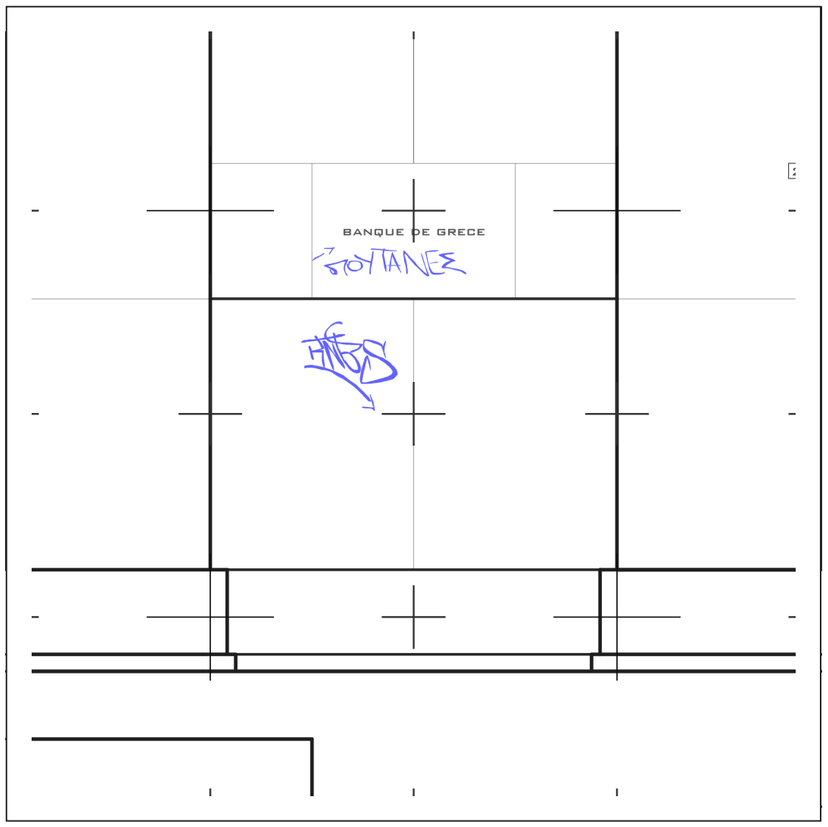
Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Event Nature: Large demonstrations ahead of new social policy announcement.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gw3ll8a Last Visit: 09 | 11 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #B03



Writing Serial No: #014



Text

Reads: Whores → (Banque De Grece)

[ΠΟΥΤΑΝΕΣ → (BANQUE DE GRECE)]

Image

Date Taken: 20 | 10 | 2010

Image Caption: A man smokes while waiting near the graffiti-daubed facade of the Greek central bank during the second day of a national strike in central Athens.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Blue Permanent Ink

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

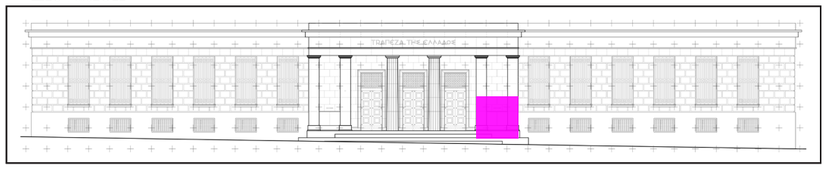
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 21 | 10 | 2010

Post Title: Greece crisis: a second day of riots in Athens

Elevation



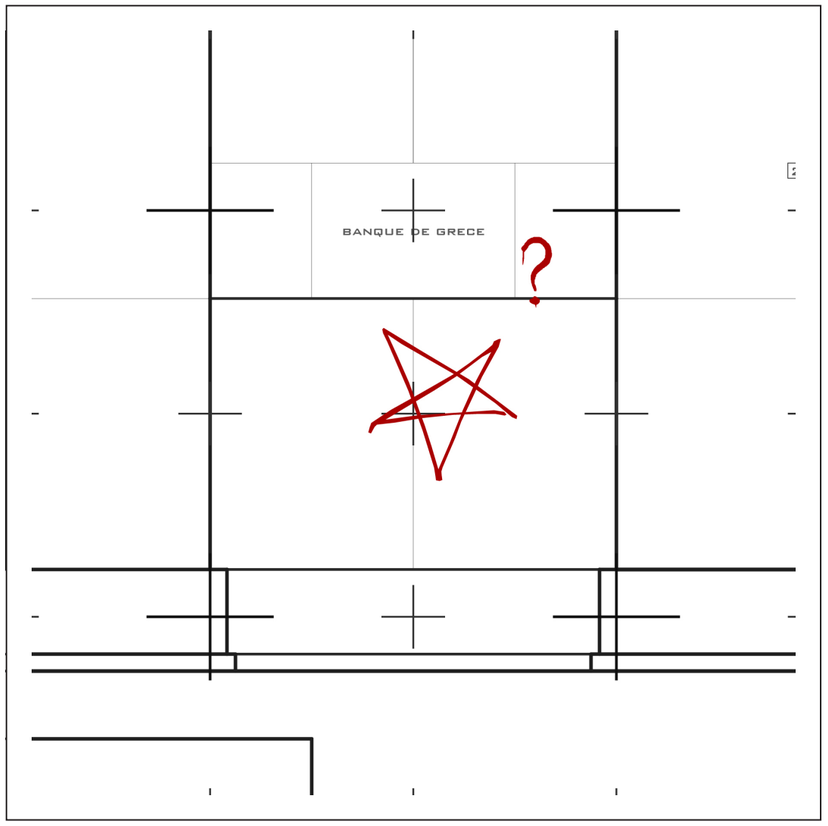
Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Event Nature: Large demonstrations ahead of new social policy announcement.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nbpd5tu Last Visit: 12 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #B04



Writing Serial No: #015



Text

Reads: (Banque De Grece)? *

[(BANQUE DE GRECE)? *]

Image

Date Taken: 20 | 10 | 2010

Image Caption: "There is money", Bank of Greece, Panepistimiou Str.

Photographer: Pinelopi Thomaidi

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

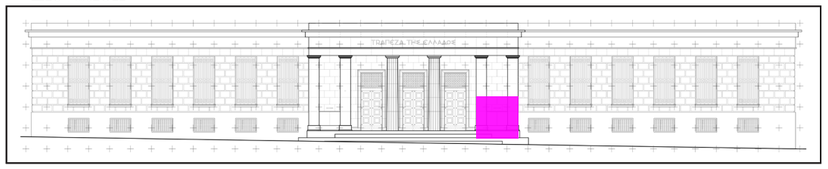
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 28 | 10 | 2010

Post Title: Greek Protests: Some Pictures Around the Greek Protests.

Elevation



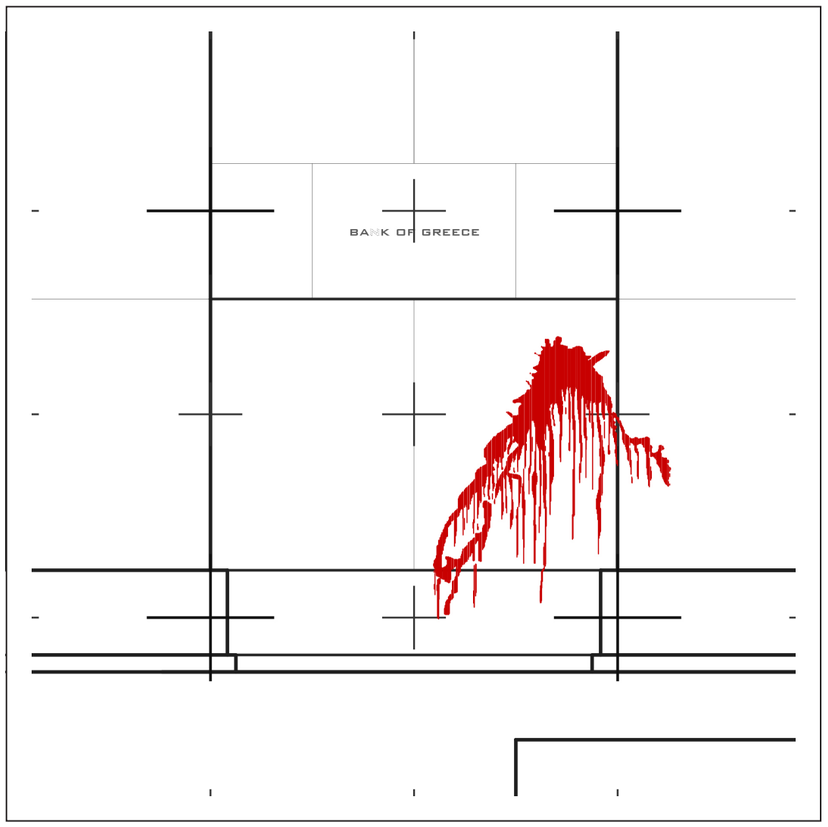
Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Event Nature: Large demonstrations ahead of new social policy announcement.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zwts32v Last Visit: 13 | 10 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #B05



Writing Serial No: #016



Text

Reads: ---

Image

Date Taken: 20 | 10 | 2010

Image Caption: Riots police walk past the vandalized entrance of the Bank of Greece during clashes in central Athens.

Photographer: Petros Giannakouris (AP)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Erasure Date: 23 | 10 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

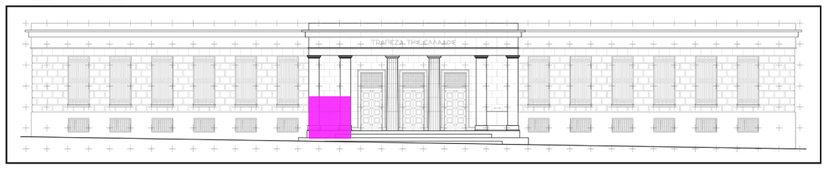
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 25 | 10 | 2010

Post Title: Riots Rock Greece As Thousands Take To The Streets (PHOTOS)

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 20 | 10 | 2010

Event Nature: Large demonstrations ahead of new social policy announcement.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ojdyj8k Last Visit: 16 | 12 | 2014

Writing Set No: C

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010
Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

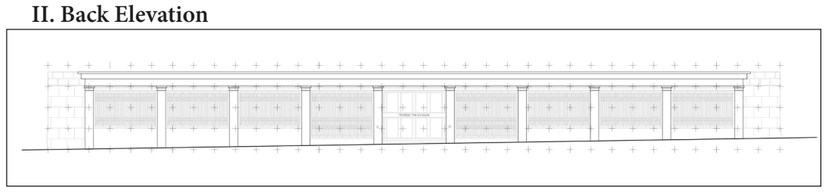
Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010
Event Nature: SECOND ANNIVERSARY IN MEMORY OF ALEXANDROS GRIGOROPOULOS.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: D

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011
Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

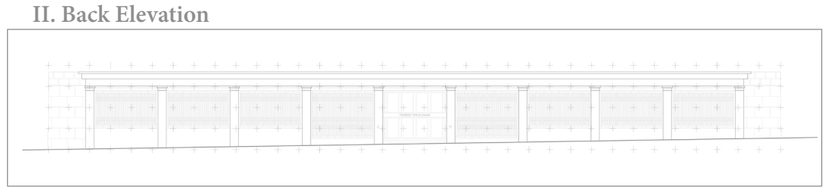
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011
Event Nature: MARCH AGAINST PLANNED EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND PUBLIC CUTS.

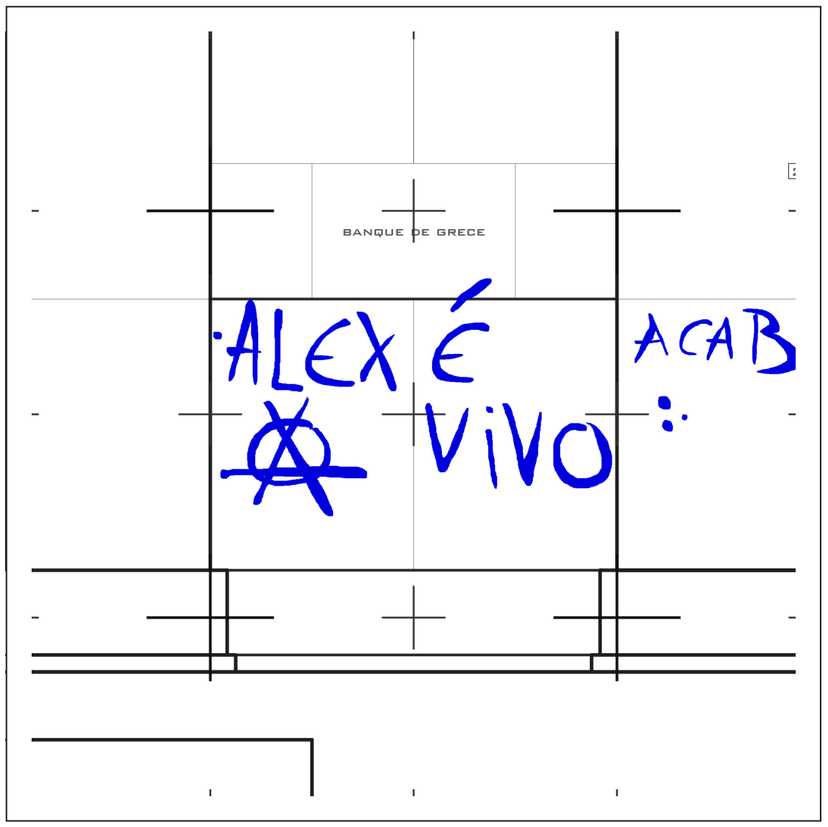
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #C01



Writing Serial No: #017



Text

Reads: Alex É Vivo 'A' ACAB

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 12 | 2010

Image Caption: A riot policeman passes by graffiti sprayed on a wall during the annual commemoration of the death of Alexis Grigoropoulos. Students staged their annual 6th December demonstration commemorating the death caused by policemen of 15 year old Alexis Grigoropoulos in 2008.

Photographer: Nikolas Georgiou (AP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Blue Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

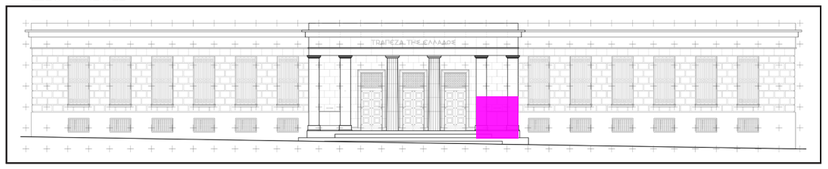
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 12 | 2010

Post Title: Youth protest Police brutality in memory of Alexis Grigoropoulos

Elevation



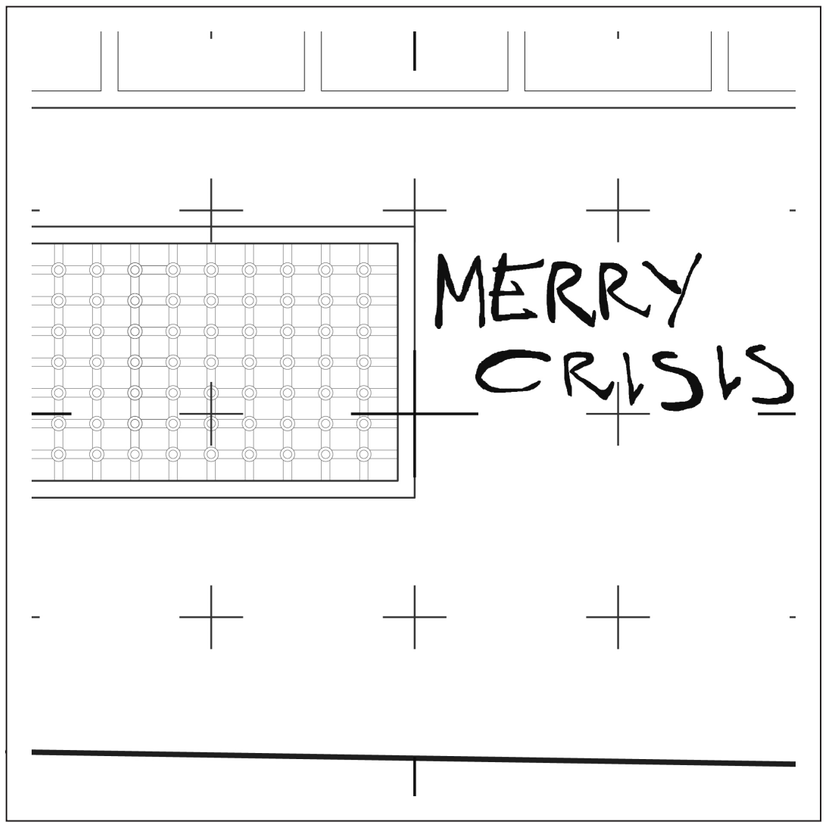
Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zzs2ml2 Last Visit: 06 | 12 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #C02



Writing Serial No: #018



Text

Reads: Merry Crisis
And A Happy New Fear

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 12 | 2010
Image Caption: Merry crisis @ the Central Bank of Greece
Photographer: Kostas Kallergis (Bbc)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Black/Red Acrylic Paint
Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

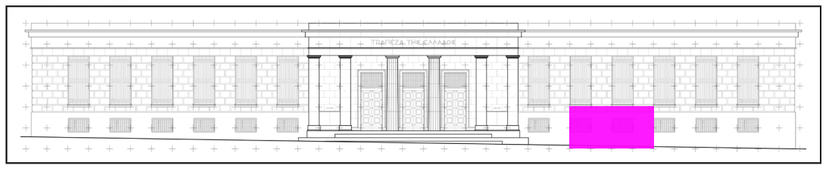
Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010
Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

Grid Location: I-ε27 – η31

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article
Date Posted: 23 | 12 | 2011
Post Title: Merry Crisis

Elevation

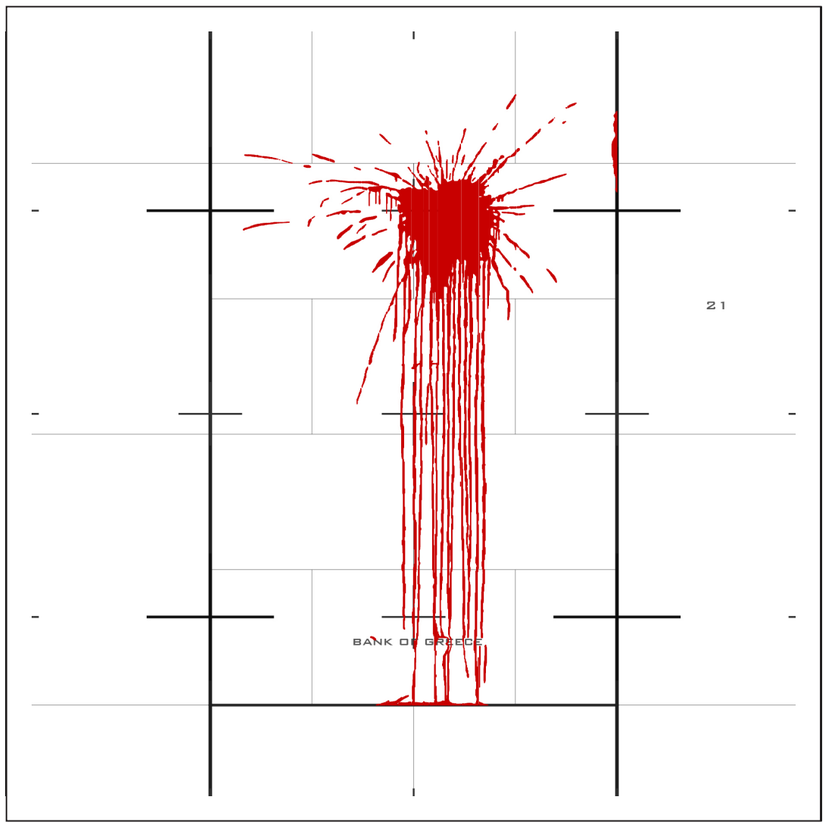


Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010
Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hkb7fkl Last Visit: 12 | 03 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #C03



Writing Serial No: #019



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 12 | 2010

Image Caption: The wall of a the Bank of Greece's headquarters is seen splattered with red paint. Groups of hooded students hurled stones at windows of banks and shops in the centre of the Athens as they marched towards the parliament building.

Photographer: Aris Messinis (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

Grid Location: I-γ14 – ε16

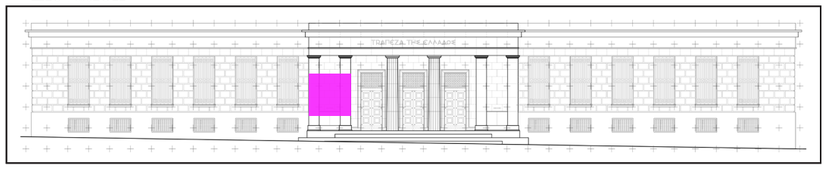
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 12 | 2010

Post Title: The wall of a the Bank of Greece's headquarters is seen splattered with red paint.

Elevation



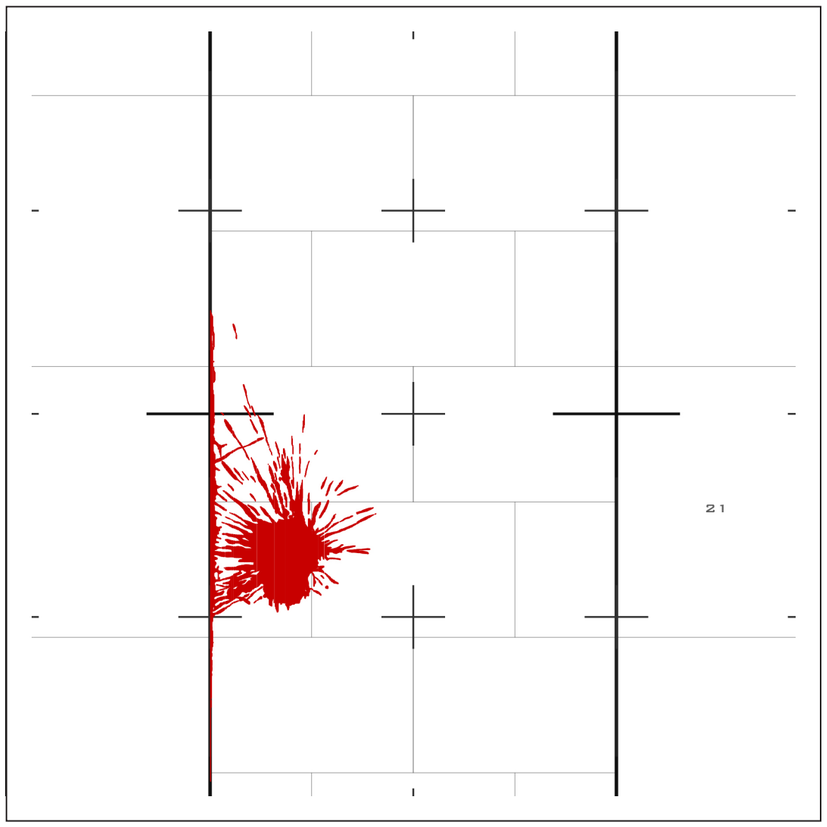
Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gnxzrtu Last Visit: 02 | 09 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #C04



Writing Serial No: #020



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 12 | 2010

Image Caption: Riot policemen stand guard in front of a branch of the Bank of Greece, stained with red paint thrown by demonstrators.

Photographer: Yiorgos Karahalis (Reuters)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

Grid Location: I-γ14 – ε16

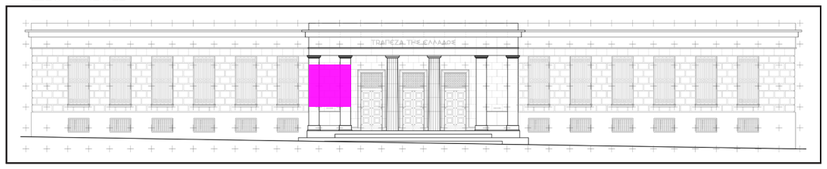
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 06 | 12 | 2010

Post Title: Youths hurl rocks and petrol bombs at police in Athens, Greece.

Elevation



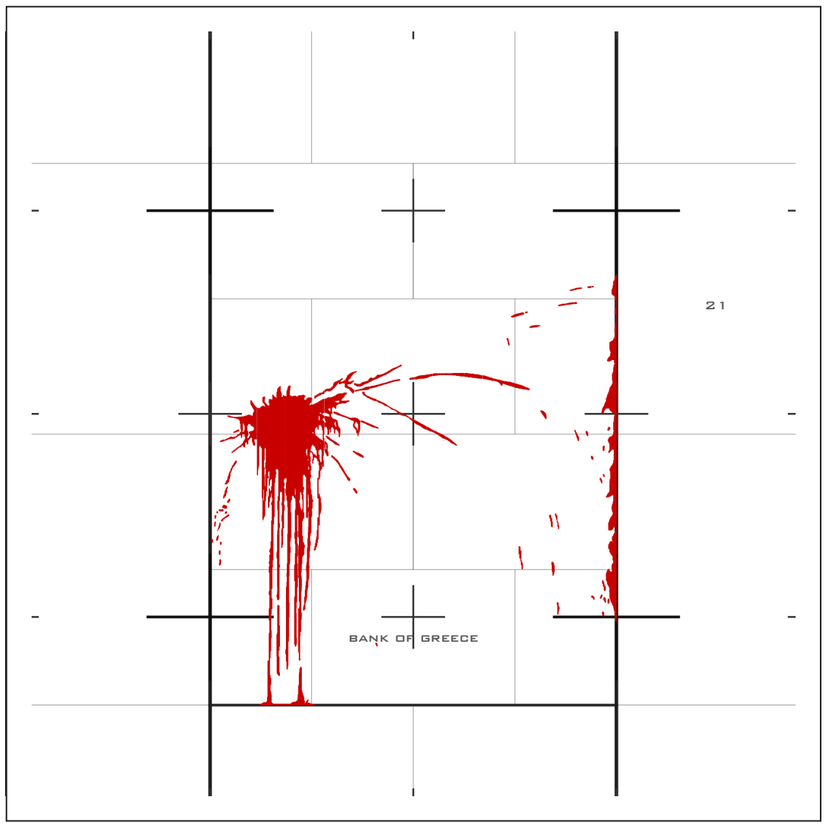
Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/occ7e7s Last Visit: 13 | 10 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #C05



Writing Serial No: #021



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 12 | 2010

Image Caption: The paint-spattered facade of Greece's central bank in Athens after a public workers strike last Wednesday.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg News)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

Grid Location: I-γ14 – ε16

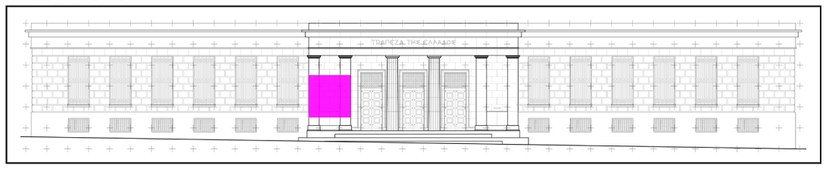
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 28 | 12 | 2010

Post Title: Europe's Economic Pain Awakens Old Arguments.

Elevation



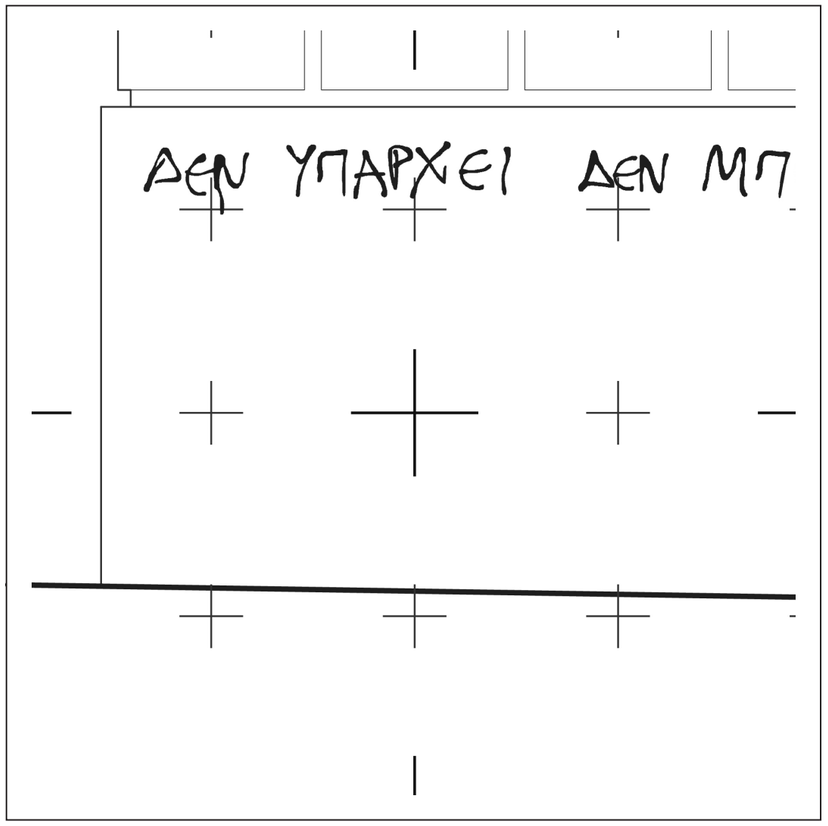
Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/per5kkp Last Visit: 18 | 05 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #C06



Writing Serial No: #022



Text

Reads: There Is No Such Thing As 'I Cannot', Only 'I Do Not Give A Fuck' *

[ΔΕΝ ΥΠΑΡΧΕΙ ΔΕΝ ΜΠΟΡΩ ΥΠΑΡΧΕΙ ΔΕΝ ΓΑΜΙΕΤΑΙ *]

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 12 | 2010

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

Grid Location: I-ε01 – η05

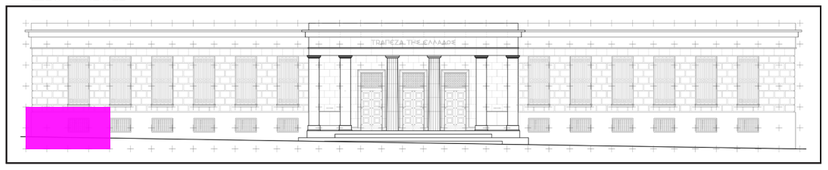
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 14 | 05 | 2011

Post Title: --------

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010

Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/h8mjjo2 Last Visit: 23 | 02 | 2014

Writing Set No: C

Duration

Writing Date: 06 | 12 | 2010
Erasure Date: 08 | 12 | 2010

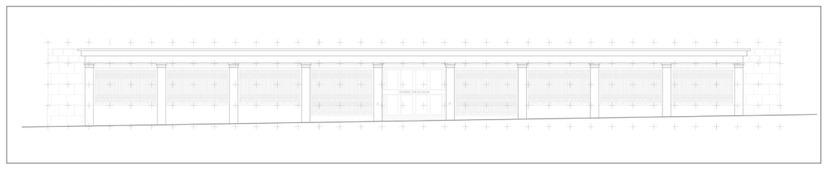
Event

Event Date: 06 | 12 | 2010
Event Nature: Second anniversary in memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: D

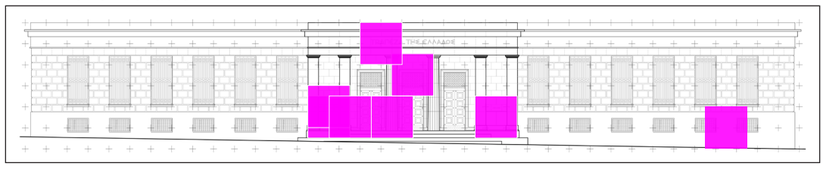
Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011
Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

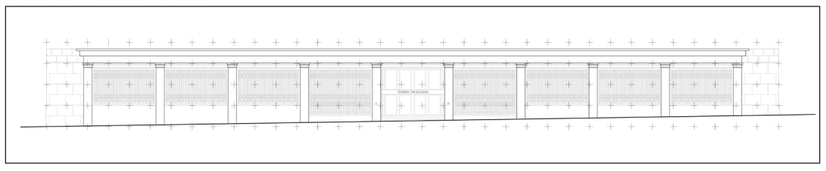
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011
Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

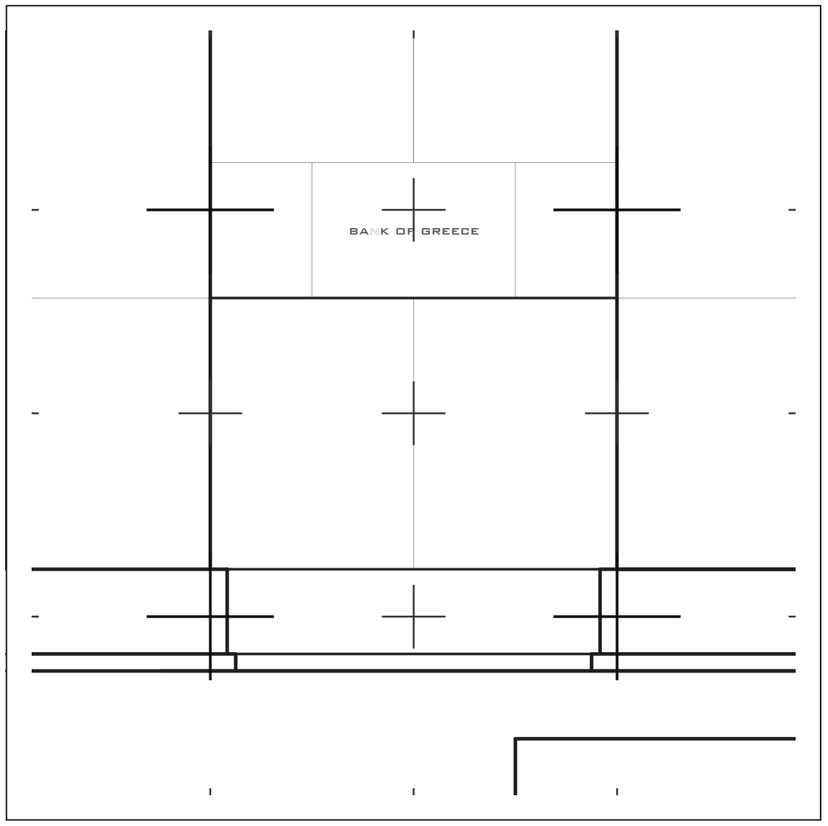
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #001



Writing Serial No: #023



Text

Reads: Ba k Of Greece ('N' Letter Removed From Epigraph)

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: Stains of paint thrown by protesters are seen next to the entrance to the Bank of Greece, the country's central bank in downtown Athens, Greece, 09 September 2011.

Photographer: Orestis Panagiotou (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Human Hands

Substance: --------

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

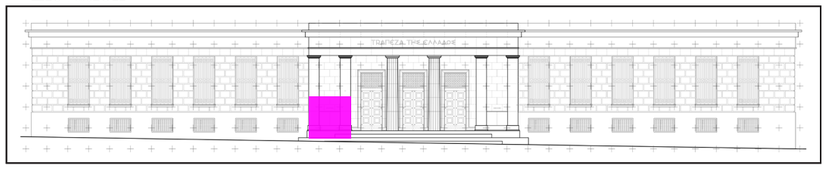
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Bank of Greece building stained by paint thrown by protesters.

Elevation



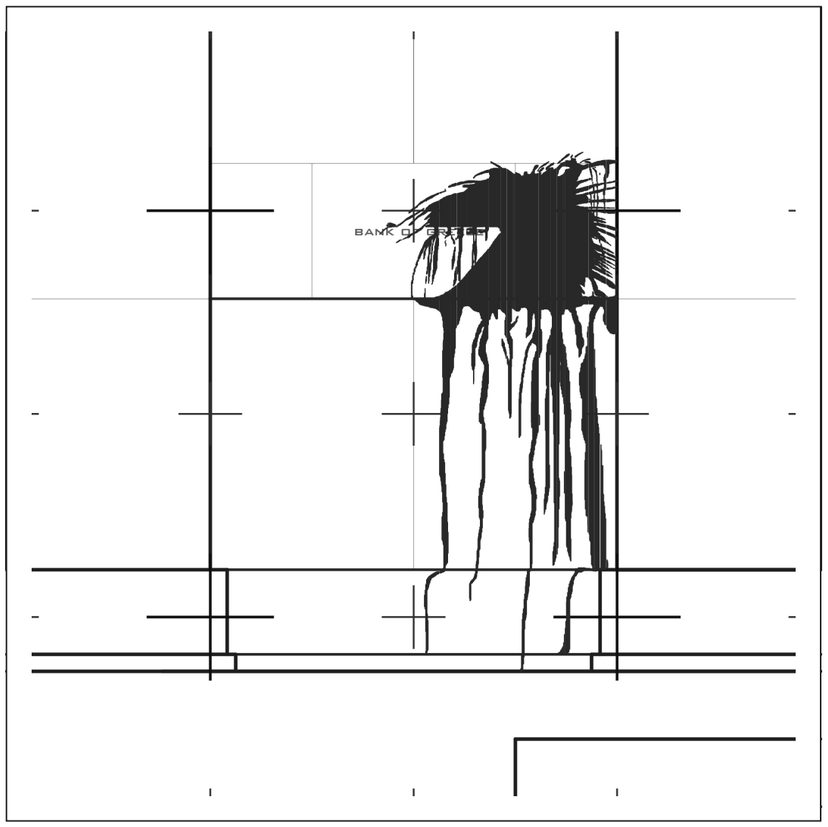
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/q4on6j2 Last Visit: 01 | 02 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D02



Writing Serial No: #024



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: Paint thrown at the walls of the Bank of Greece by protestors in Athens, Greece on September 9, 2011.

Photographer: Ken Cedeno (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Black Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

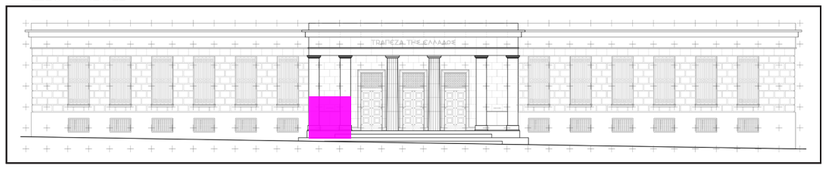
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Greece - Protest - Renewed Demonstrations Against Austerity Measures.

Elevation



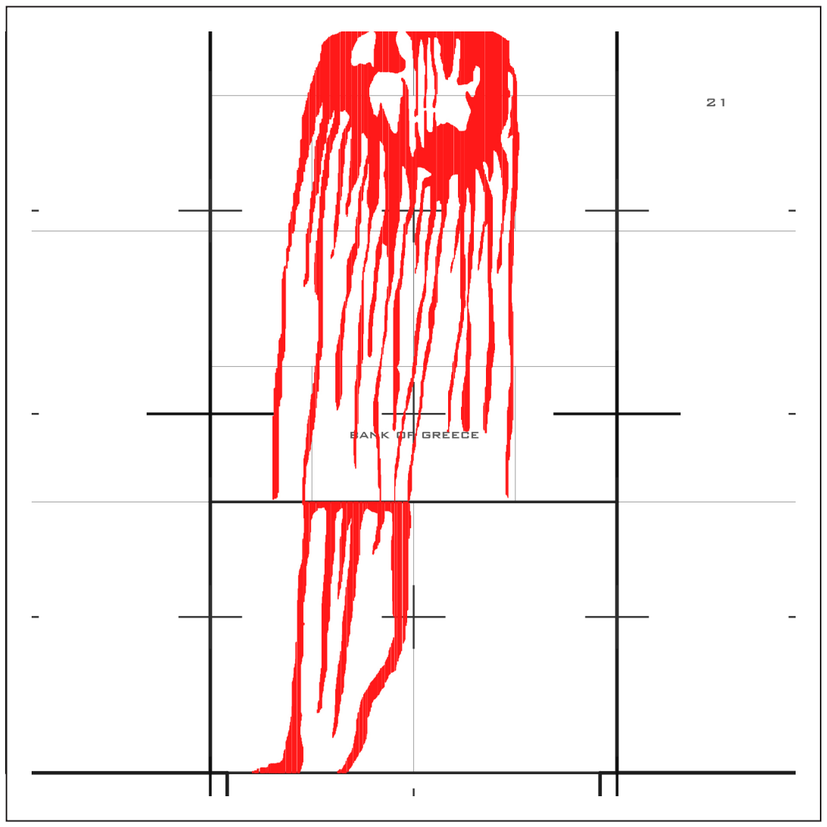
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nz57bhn Last Visit: 19 | 03 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D03



Writing Serial No: #025



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: Paint thrown at the walls of the Bank of Greece by protestors in Athens, Greece on September 9, 2011.

Photographer: Ken Cedeno (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

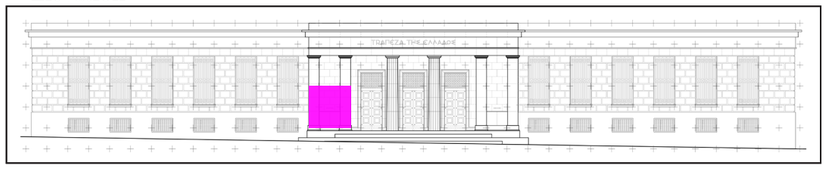
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Greece - Protest - Renewed Demonstrations Against Austerity Measures.

Elevation



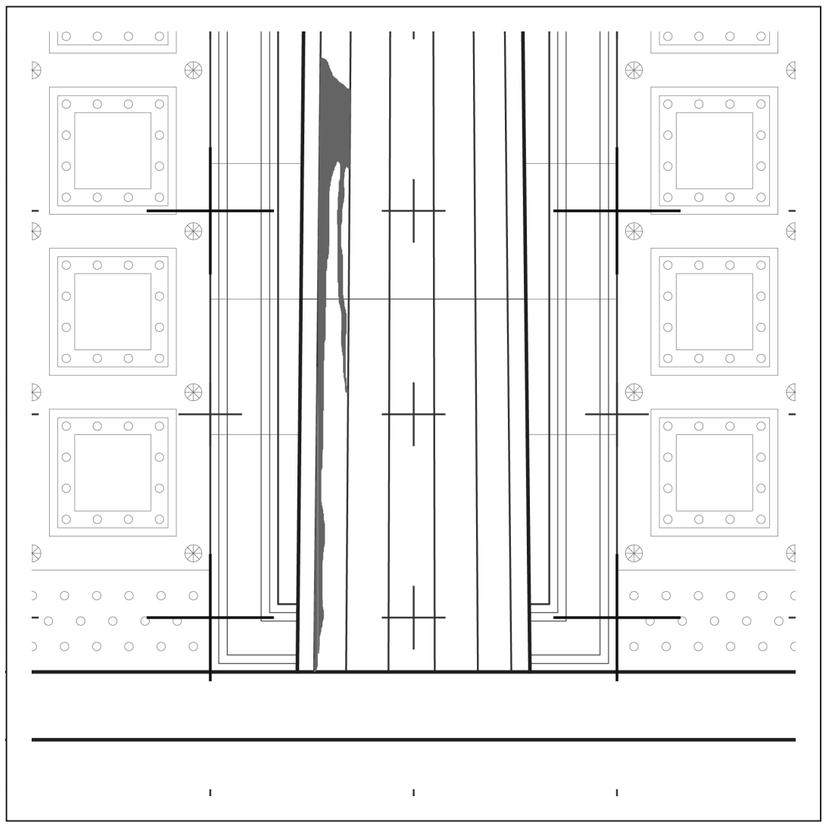
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nz57bhn Last Visit: 19 | 03 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D04



Writing Serial No: #026



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: Passersby on Friday examine splatters of paint thrown earlier by protesters at the bank of Greece in Athens.

Photographer: Petros Giannakouris (AP)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Grey Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-δ17 – ζ19

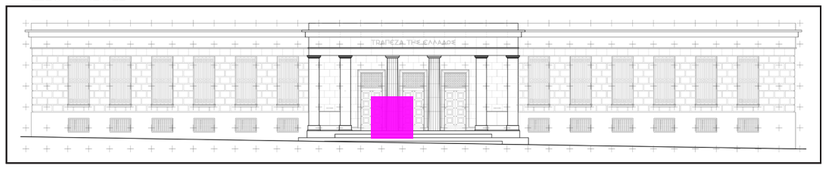
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Europe woes weigh heavily on U.S. stock markets.

Elevation



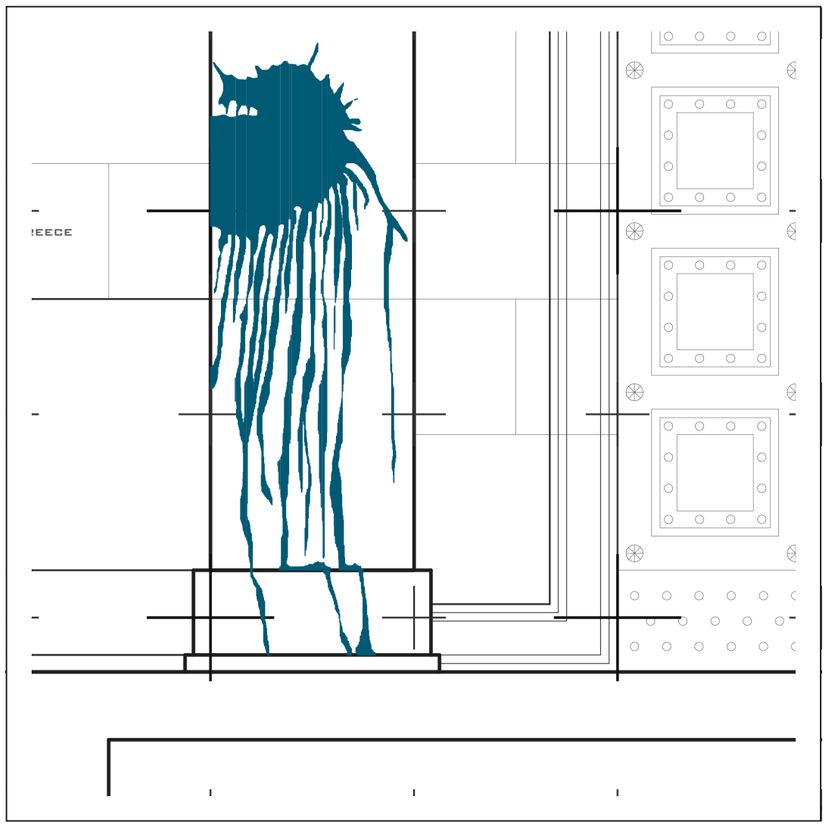
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/oelr5ev Last Visit: 28 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D05



Writing Serial No: #027



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: Paint thrown at the walls of the Bank of Greece by protestors in Athens, Greece on September 9, 2011.

Photographer: Ken Cedeno (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Blue Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-δ15 – ζ17

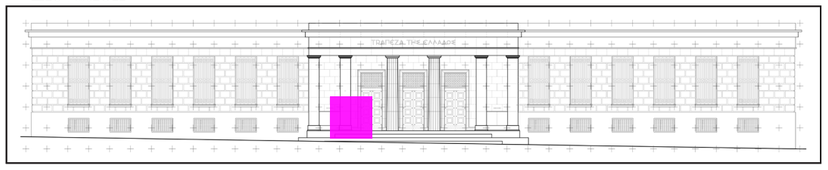
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Greece - Protest - Renewed Demonstrations Against Austerity Measures.

Elevation



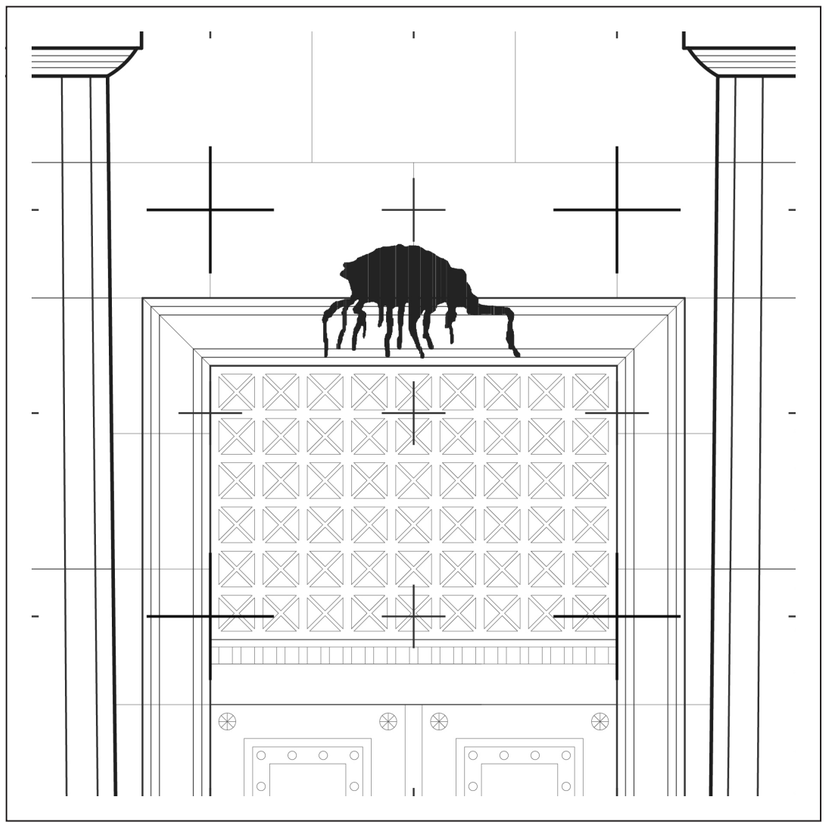
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/j3ujrkp Last Visit: 19 | 03 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D06



Writing Serial No: #028



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 15 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: A worker cleans the paint-splattered entrance of the Bank of Greece, as university students carry their flag after a protest in central Athens Thursday, Sept. 15, 2011.

Photographer: Petros Giannakouris (AP Photo)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Black Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-β18 – δ20

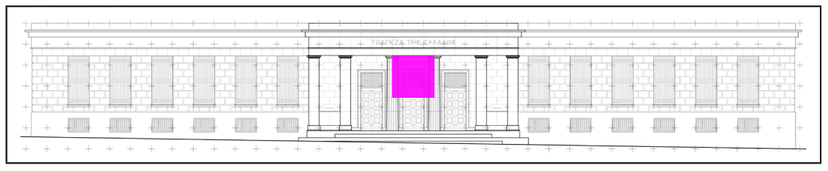
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 16 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Greek crisis questions and answers: How a small country's big problems could affect the global economy.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

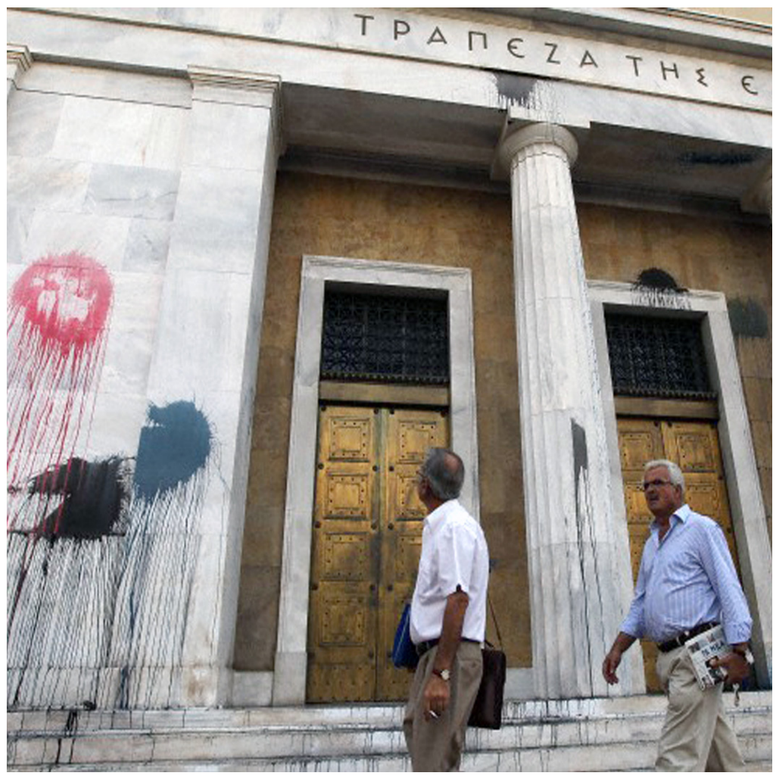
Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gm38qnd Last Visit: 26 | 10 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D07



Writing Serial No: #029



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: Passers-by look at paint stains at the entrance of the Bank of Greece following a protest by Greek students in central Athens, Greece, on 08 September 2011. The Greek students are protesting to oppose the new higher education draft law.

Photographer: Orestis Panagiotou (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Black Emulsion Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-a17 - y19

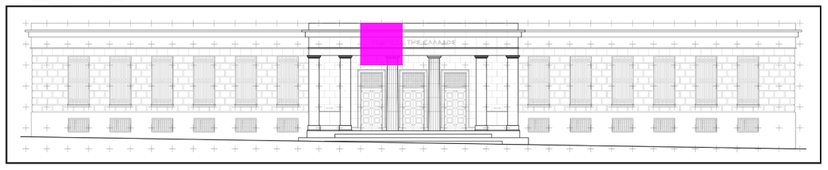
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: Greek crisis questions and answers: How a small country's big problems could affect the global economy.

Elevation



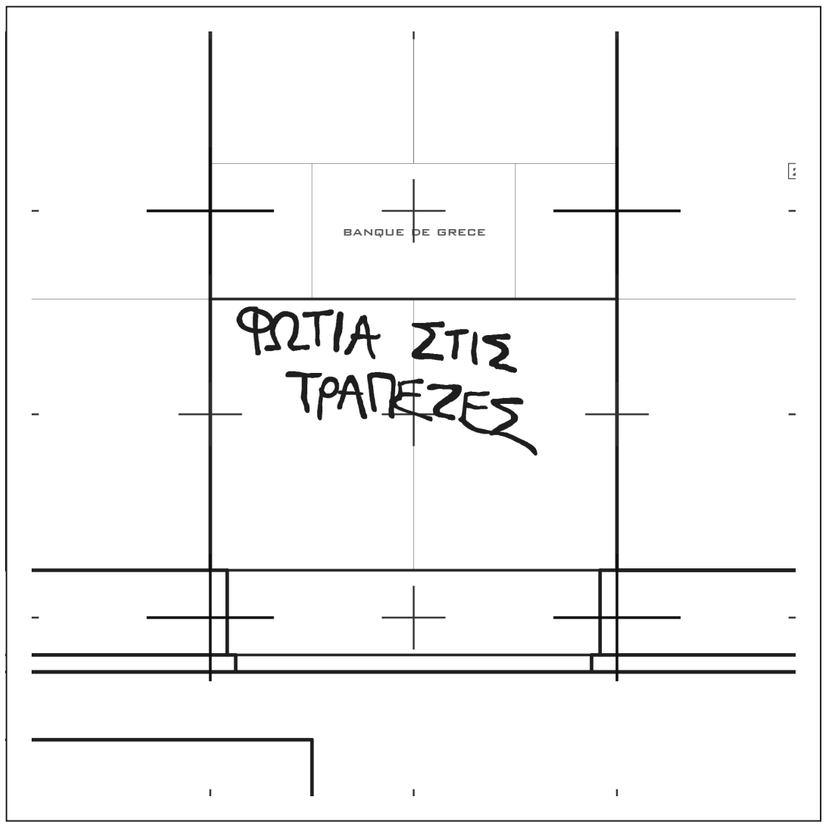
Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jy3qbmt Last Visit: 09 | 02 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D08



Writing Serial No: #030



Text

Reads: Burn The Banks
[ΦΩΤΙΑ ΣΤΙΣ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: A poster burns in front of Bank of Greece headquarters as the graffiti reads "Burn banks" during a march in central Athens, Friday, Sept 9, 2011. Greek police fired tear gas to repel stone-throwing protesters after lawmakers approved drastic austerity cuts.

Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis (AP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Black Acrylic Paint
Surface: White Marble

Duration

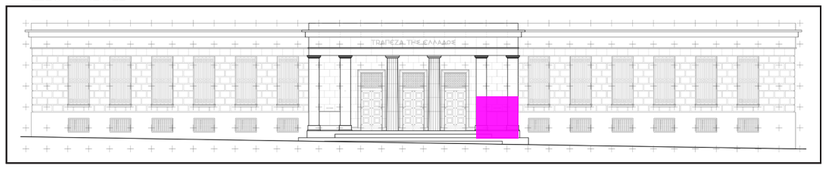
Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011
Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 09 | 09 | 2011
Post Title: Greece Financial Crisis.

Elevation

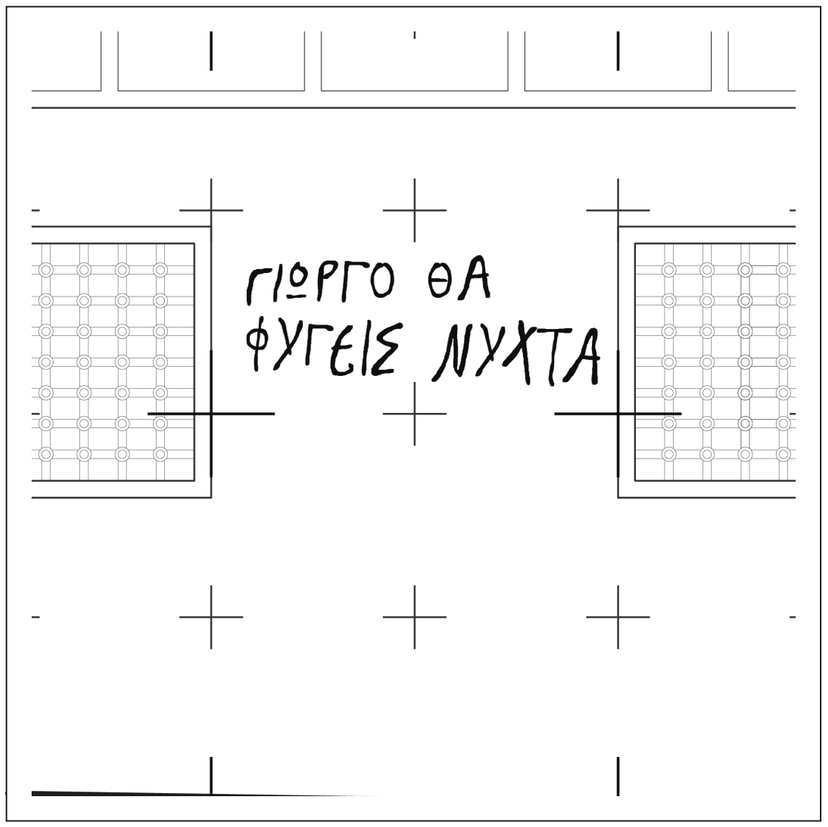


Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011
Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jzlz9l5 Last Visit: 18 | 11 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #D09



Writing Serial No: #031



Text

Reads: George [Papandreou] You Will Go During The Night

[ΓΙΩΡΓΟ ΘΑ ΦΥΓΕΙΣ ΝΥΧΤΑ]

Image

Date Taken: 09 | 09 | 2011

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: GreyMarble

Duration

Writing Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Erasure Date: 15 | 09 | 2011

Grid Location: I-ε33 – η35

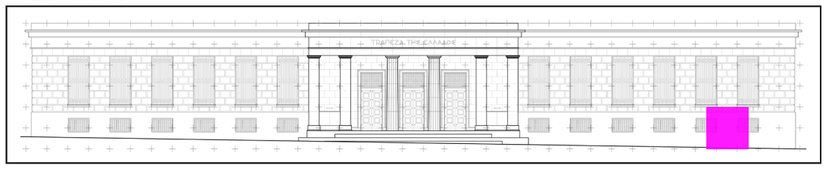
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 18 | 09 | 2011

Post Title: G. Papandreou will be in Lamia City tomorrow. He is not welcome!!!

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 09 | 09 | 2011

Event Nature: March against planned educational reforms and public cuts.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/y8hromsy Last Visit: 26 | 11 | 2013

Writing Set No: E

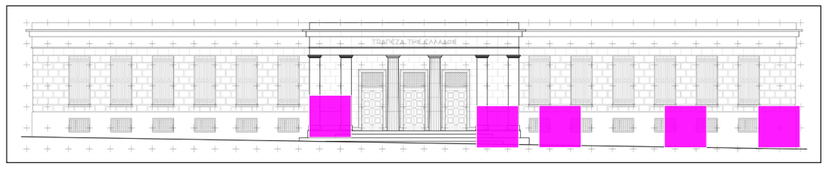
Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

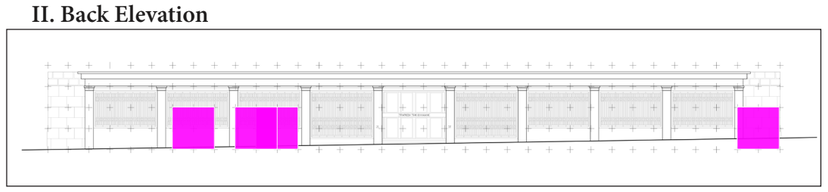
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: MASS PROTEST AGAINST PLANNED AUSTERITY MEASURES.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: F

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

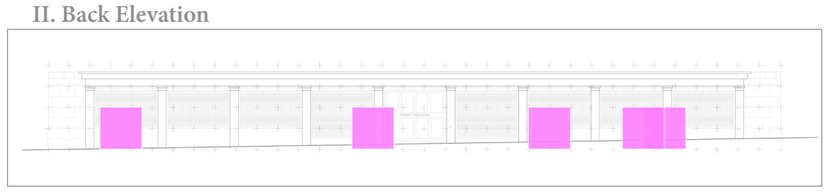
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: 48H STRIKES AND MASS DEMONSTRATIONS RESULT TO EXTENSIVE DAMAGES IN URBAN FABRIC.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #E01



Writing Serial No: #032



Text

Reads: Capitalism Or Revolution

[ΚΑΠΙΤΑΛΙΣΜΟΣ Ή ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΗ]

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

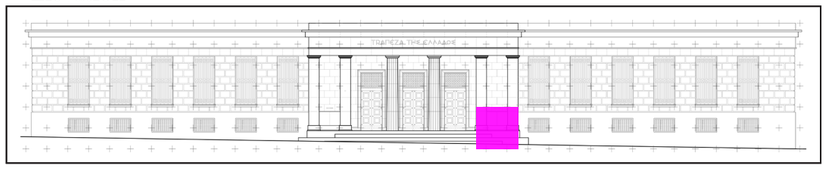
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



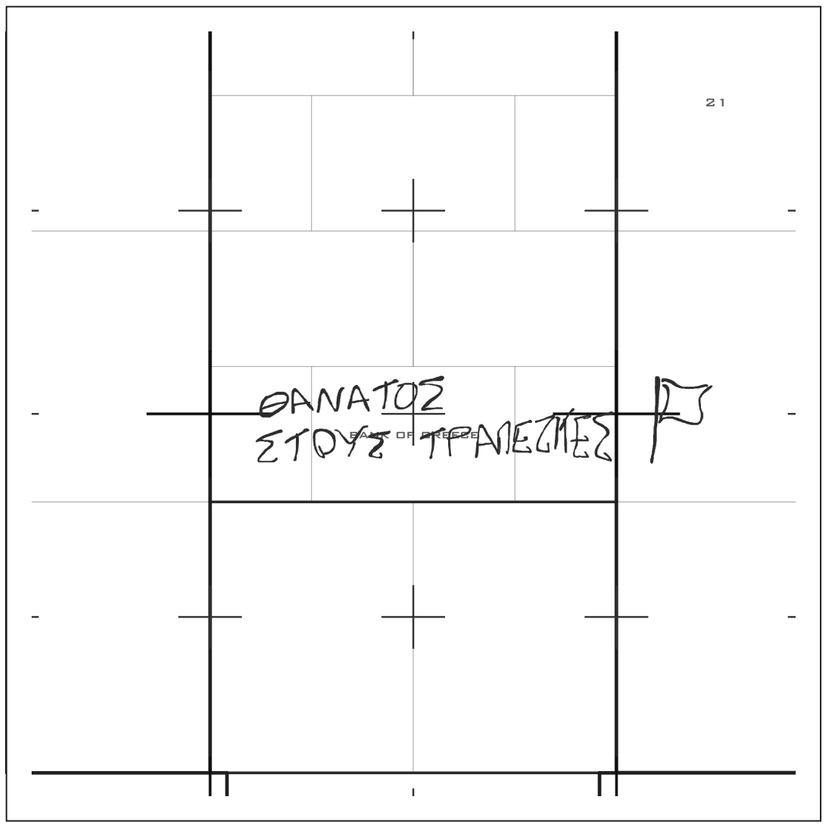
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E02



Writing Serial No: #033



Text

Reads: Death to Bankers

[ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΙΤΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

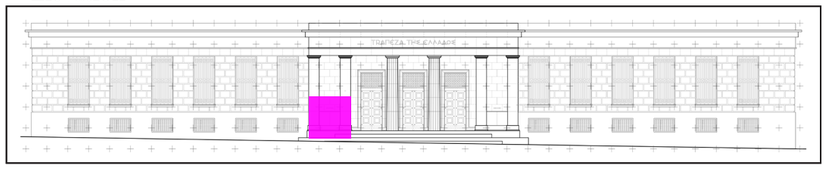
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



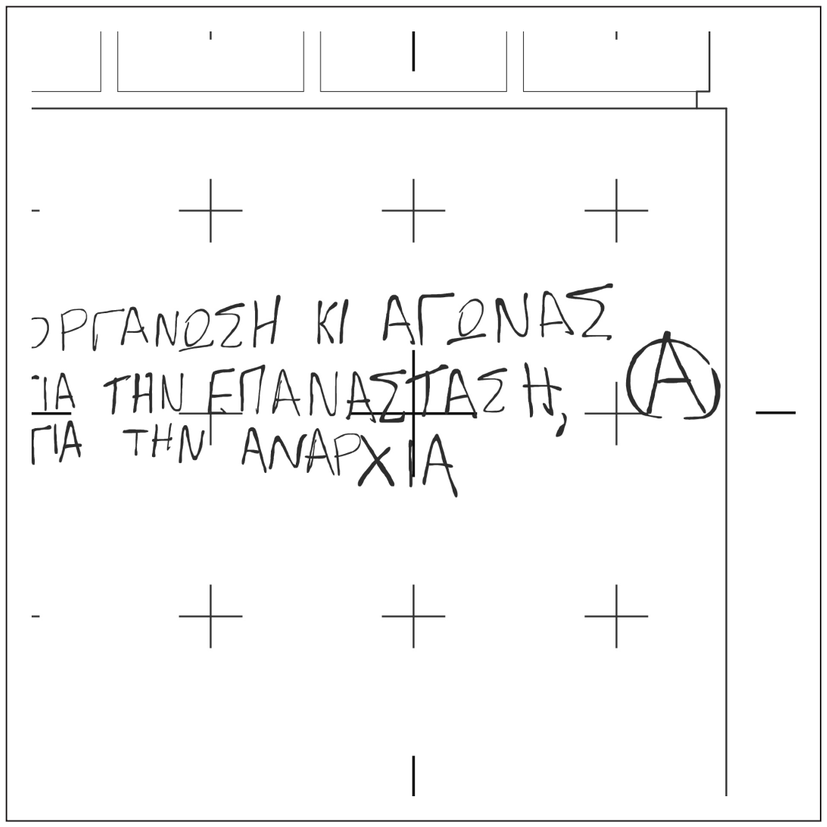
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E03



Text

Reads: Organization And Fight
For The Revolution,
For The Anarchy 'A'
[ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΚΙ ΑΓΩΝΑΣ
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΗ,
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΝΑΡΧΙΑ 'Α']

Writing

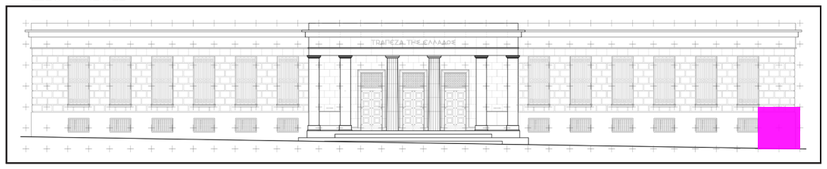
Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Black Acrylic Paint
Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

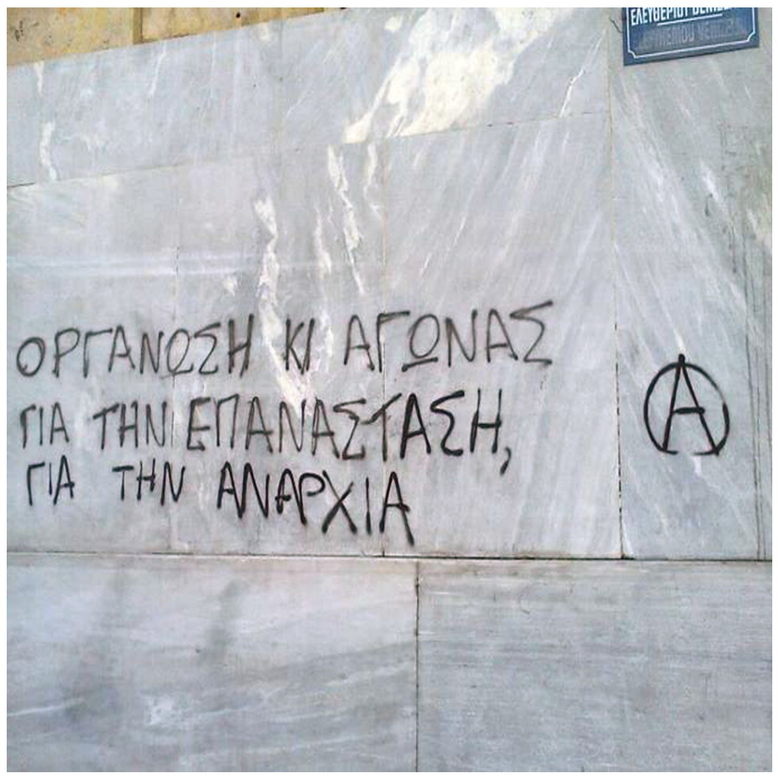
Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-ε36 – η38

Elevation



Writing Serial No: #034



Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012
Image Caption: --------
Photographer: --------

Report

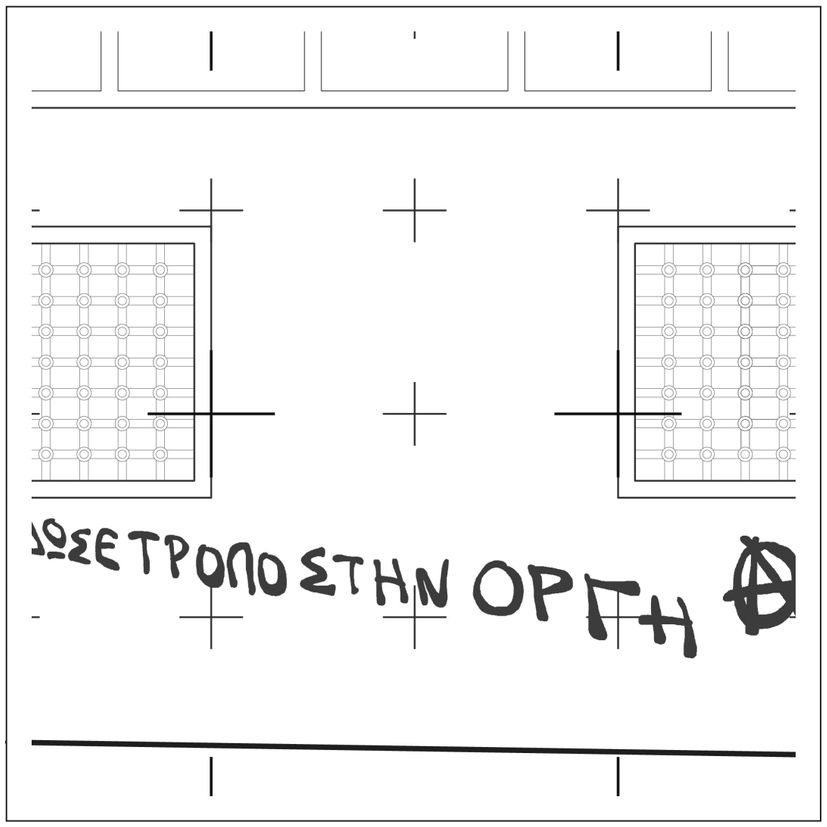
Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012
Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E04



Writing Serial No: #035



Text

Reads: Give Rage A Way 'A'

[ΔΩΣΕ ΤΡΟΠΟ ΣΤΗΝ ΟΡΓΗ 'Α']*

*Wordplay of the famous popular saying 'Give Way To Rage'.

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-ε25 – η27

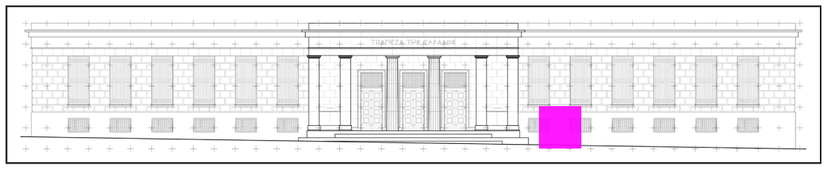
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



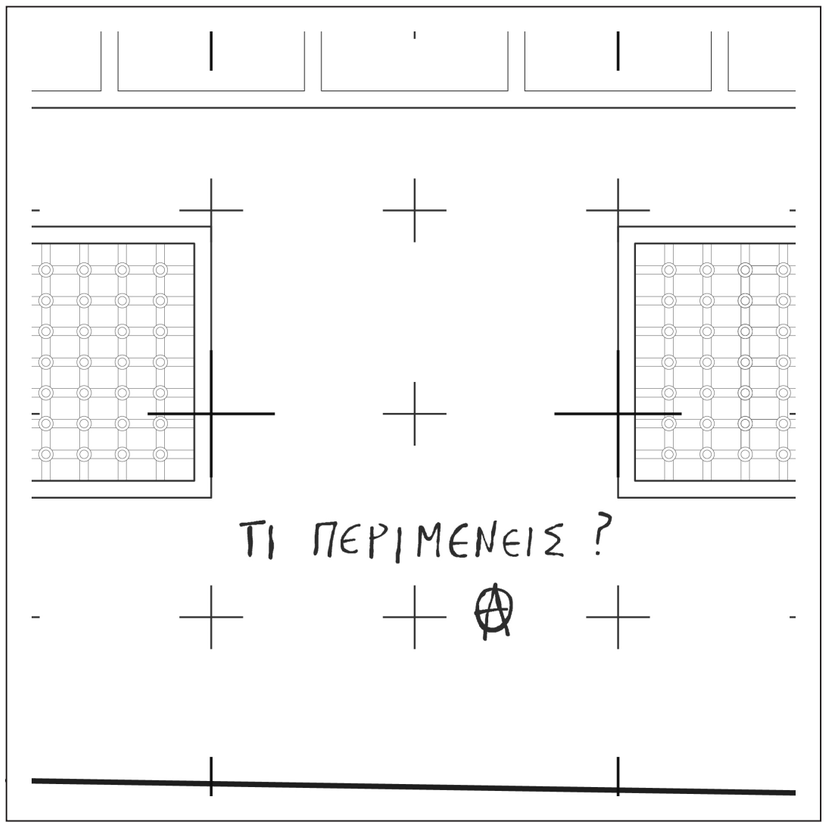
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E05



Writing Serial No: #036



Text

Reads: What Are you Waiting For 'A'

[ΤΙ ΠΕΡΙΜΕΝΕΙΣ; 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: ---

Photographer: ---

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-ε31 – η33

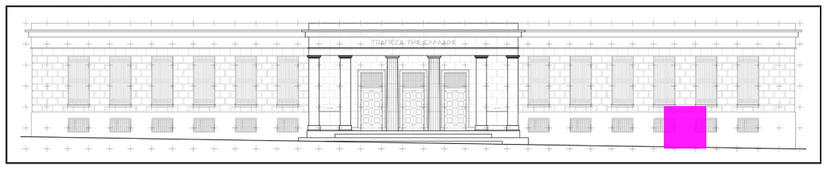
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



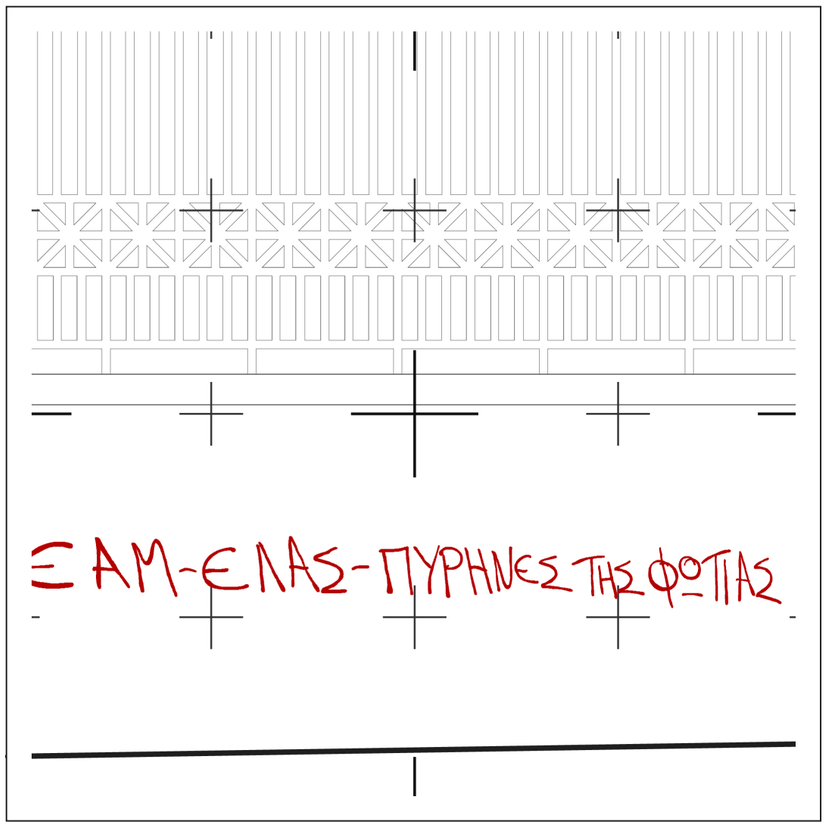
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E06



Writing Serial No: #037



Text

Reads: WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR 'A'

[ΤΙ ΠΕΡΙΜΕΝΕΙΣ; 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: AEROSOL SPRAYCAN

Substance: BLACK ACRYLIC PAINT

Surface: GREY MARBLE

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ11 – ε13

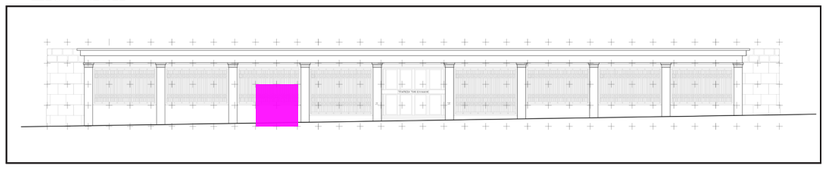
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur PHOTOREPORTAGE

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: PHOTOS OF THE ANARCHIST MARCH (SLOGANS)

Elevation



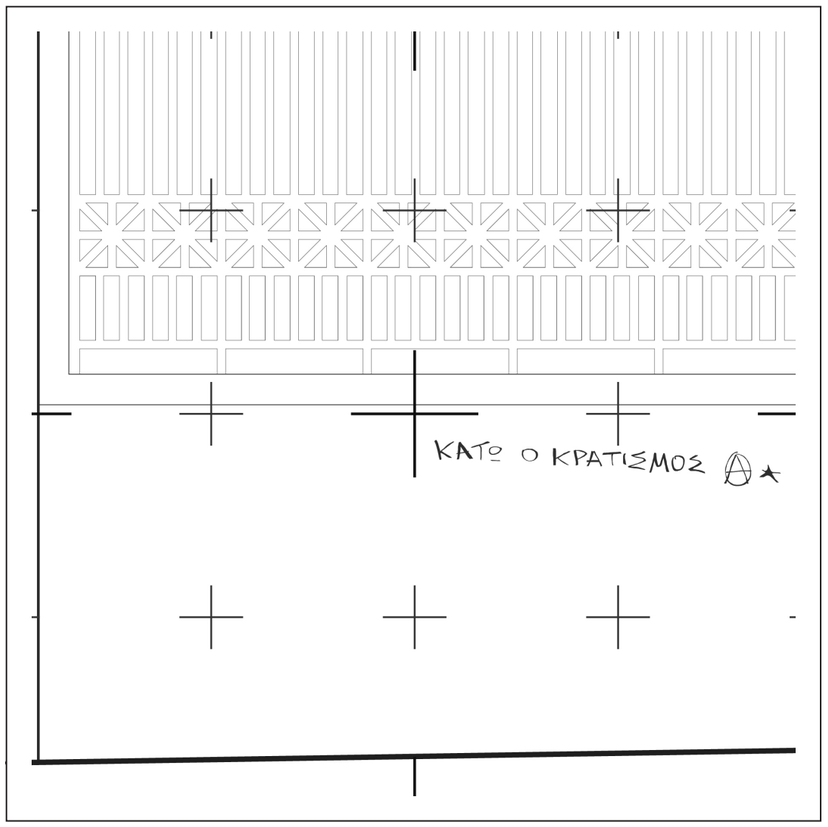
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: MASS PROTEST AGAINST PLANNED AUSTERITY MEASURES.

Image Source: HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/HT4UQ7U Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E07



Writing Serial No: #038



Text

Reads: STATISM DOWN 'Α' *

[ΚΑΤΩ Ο ΚΡΑΤΙΣΜΟΣ 'Α' *]

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: MARKER PEN

Substance: BLACK PERMANENT INK

Surface: GREY MARBLE

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ10 – ε12

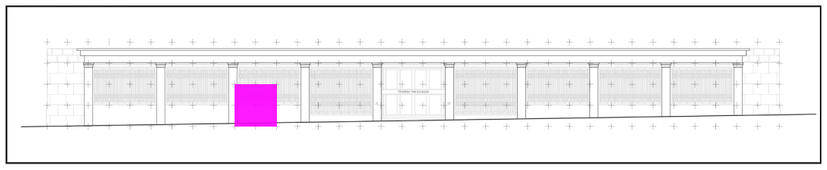
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur PHOTOREPORTAGE

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: PHOTOS OF THE ANARCHIST MARCH (SLOGANS)

Elevation



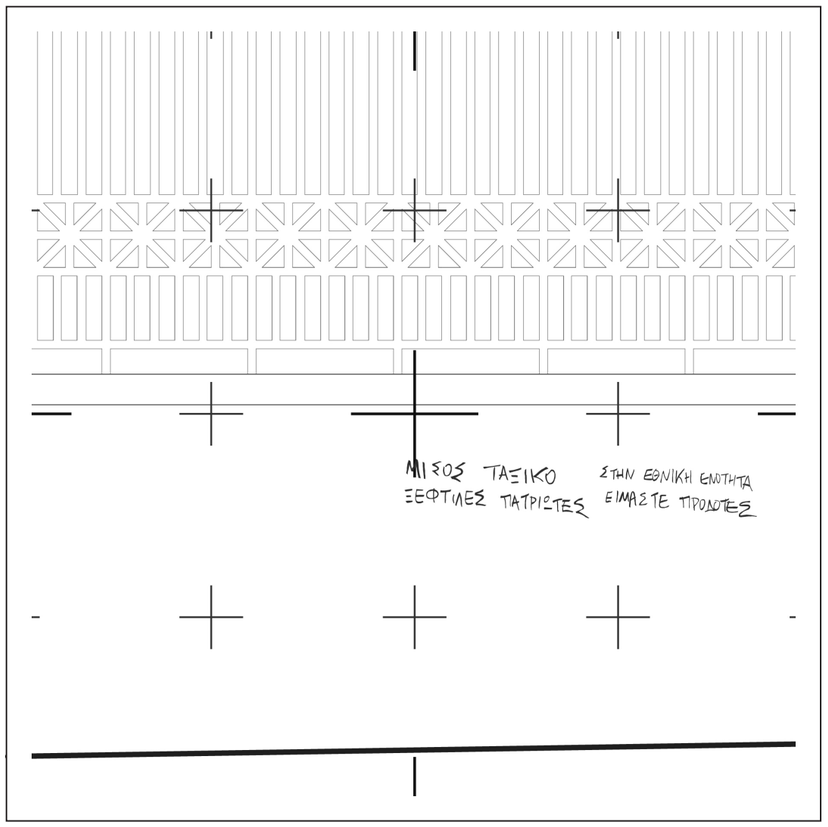
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: MASS PROTEST AGAINST PLANNED AUSTERITY MEASURES.

Image Source: HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/HT4UQ7U Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E08



Writing Serial No: #039



Text

Reads: Class Hate You Patriots,
We Are Betrayers Of The National Unity
[ΜΙΣΟΣ ΤΑΞΙΚΟ ΞΕΦΤΙΛΕΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΩΤΕΣ,
ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΕΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΕΙΜΑΣΤΕ ΠΡΟΔΟΤΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012
Image Caption: --------
Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen
Substance: Black Permanent Ink
Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

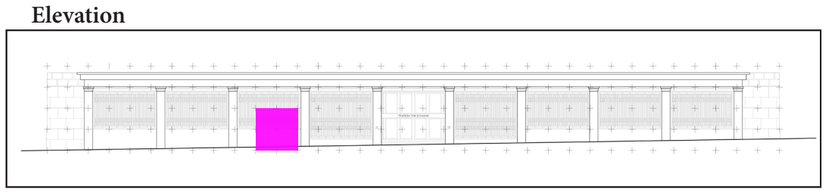
Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ11 – ε13

Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012
Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



Event

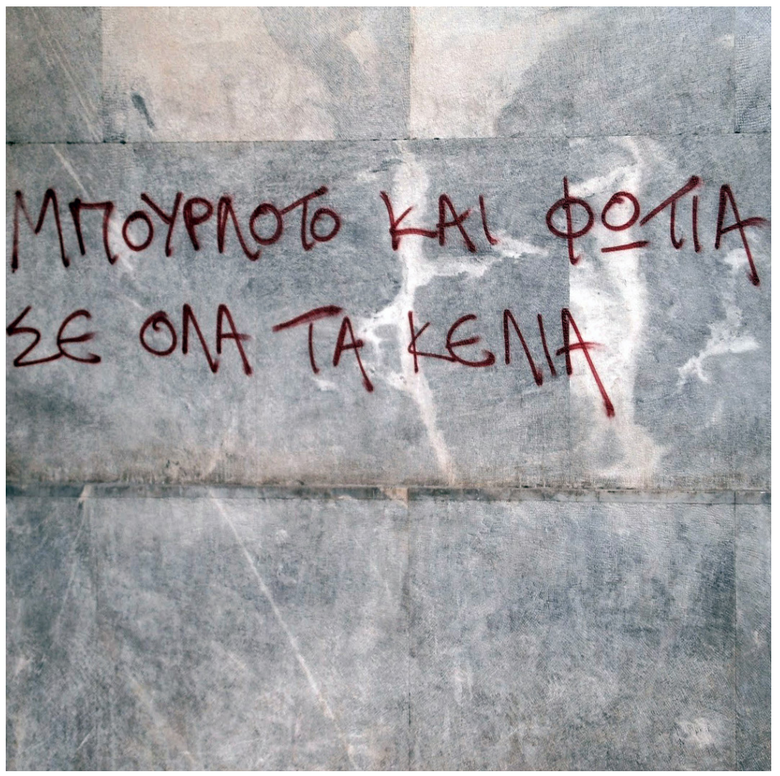
Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E09



Writing Serial No: #040



Text

Reads: Burn All Detention Cells

[ΜΠΟΥΡΛΟΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΦΩΤΙΑ ΣΕ ΟΛΑ ΤΑ ΚΕΛΙΑ]

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ34 - ε36

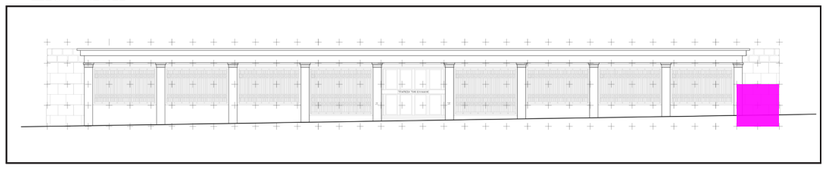
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #E10



Writing Serial No: #041



Text

Reads: Let's Not Live As Slaves
Revolt People
[NA MHN ZHSOYME SAN DOYLOI
EXEGERSH LAE]

Image

Date Taken: 04 | 02 | 2012
Image Caption: --------
Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Black Acrylic Paint
Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

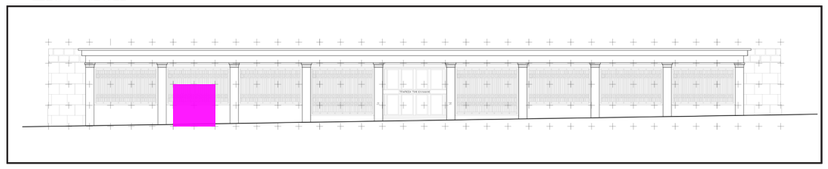
Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II y07 – ε09

Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 05 | 02 | 2012
Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March (Slogans)

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: Mass protest against planned austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ht4uq7u Last Visit: 23 | 08 | 2013

Writing Set No: E

Duration

Writing Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 06 | 02 | 2012

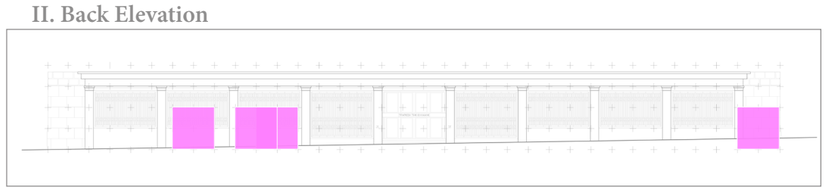
Event

Event Date: 04 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: MASS PROTEST AGAINST PLANNED AUSTERITY MEASURES.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: F

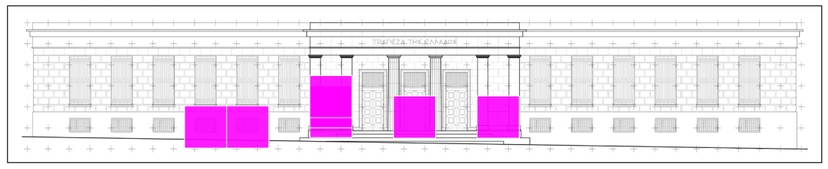
Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

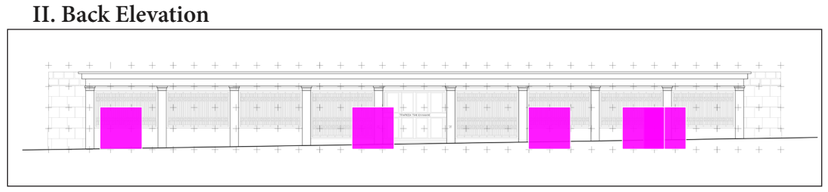
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: 48H STRIKES AND MASS DEMONSTRATIONS RESULT TO EXTENSIVE DAMAGES IN URBAN FABRIC.

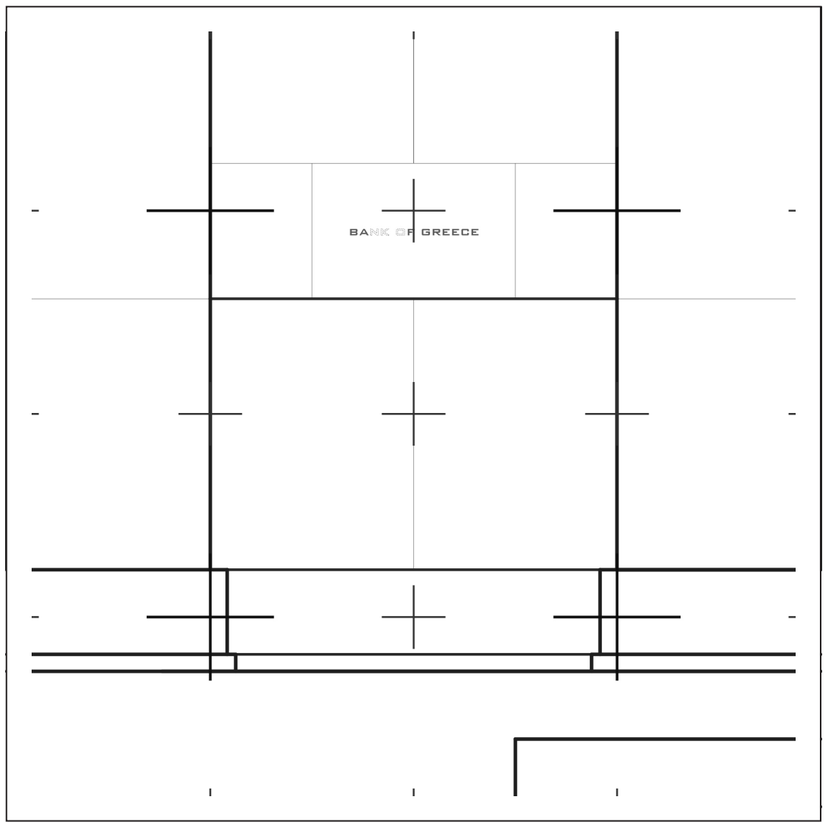
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #F01



Writing Serial No: #042



Text

Reads: BA _F GREECE ('NK O' LETTERS REMOVED FROM EPIGRAPH)

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: A DEFACED BANK OF GREECE SIGN IS SEEN DURING PROTESTS AGAINST PLANNED REFORMS BY GREECE'S COALITION GOVERNMENT IN ATHENS, FEBRUARY 12, 2012.

Photographer: JOHN KOLESIDIS (REUTERS)

Writing

Tool: HUMAN HANDS

Substance: --------

Surface: WHITE MARBLE

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

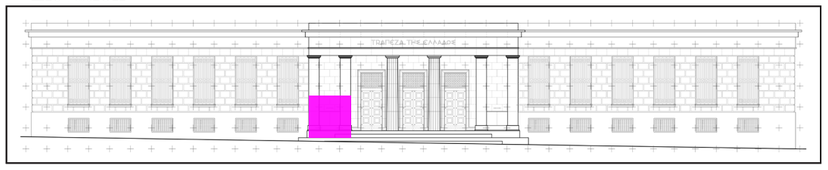
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur PHOTOREPORTAGE

Date Posted: 12 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: ANTI-AUSTERITY RIOTS IN GREECE.

Elevation



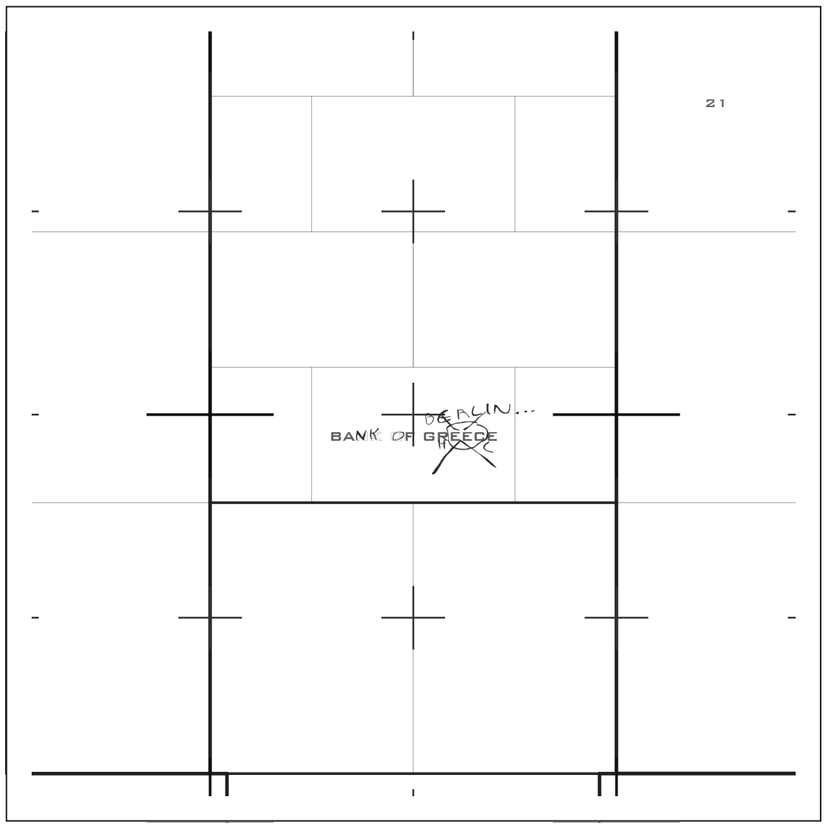
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48H STRIKES AND MASS DEMONSTRATIONS RESULT TO EXTENSIVE DAMAGES IN URBAN FABRIC.

Image Source: HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/ZKGL62S Last Visit: 17 | 10 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F02



Writing Serial No: #043



Text

Reads: [Bank Of Greece] Berlin...

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: A man takes a photograph of the name plate for Greece's central bank, the sign now covered in graffiti reads, 'Bank of Berlin' after demonstrations in Athens, Greece, on Feb.12, 2012.

Photographer: Angelos Tzortzinis (Bloomberg)

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Black Permanent Ink

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

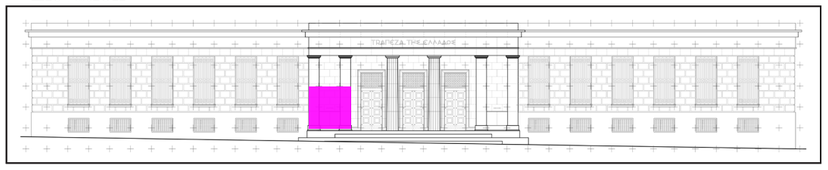
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Greece Bailout Faces European Finance Chiefs After Parliamentary Approval.

Elevation



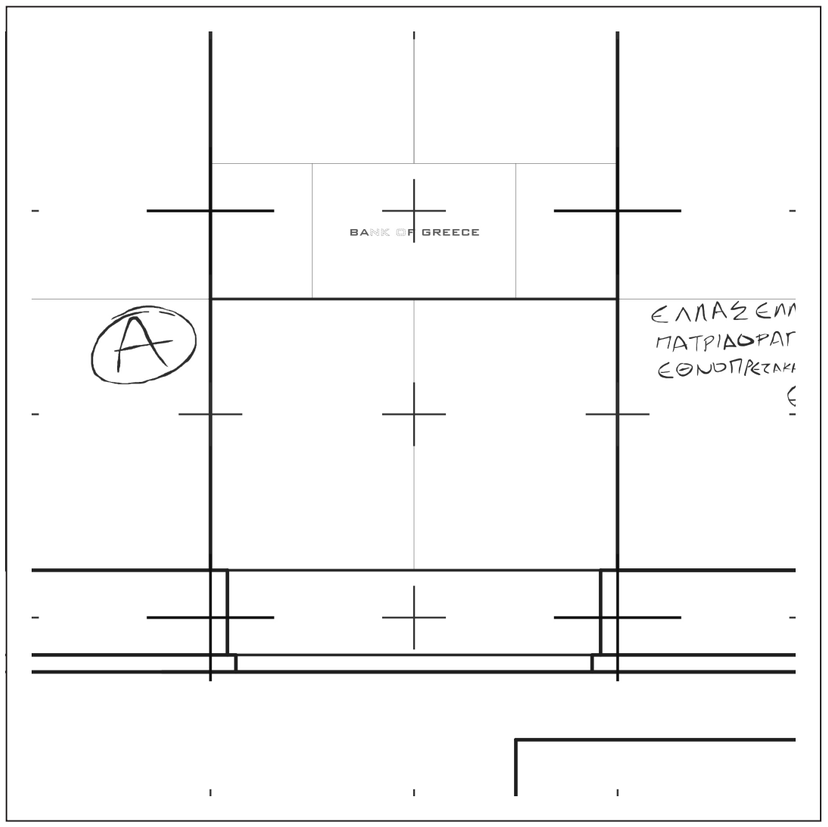
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/7rycmh6 Last Visit: 24 | 11 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F03



Writing Serial No: #044



Text

Reads: Greeks' Greece, Homeland Slaves, And Nation Junkies 'A'

[ΕΛΛΑΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΔΟΡΑΓΤΩΝ ΕΘΝΟΠΡΕΖΑΚΗΔΩΝ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: Graffiti on the Bank of Greece's HQ in Athens calls it the Bank of Berlin, in reference to the belief that Germany is now in control of the country.

Photographer: Stathis Kalligeris (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Black Permanent Ink

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

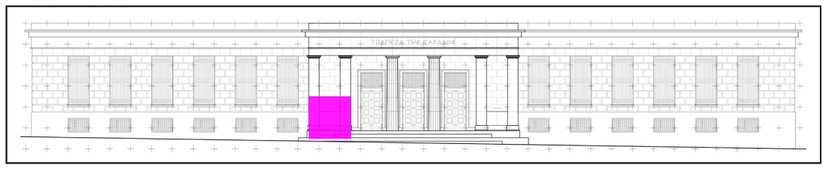
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 15 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Greeks brand Germans 'Nazis' for driving through painful cuts and 'taking control of their economy.'

Elevation



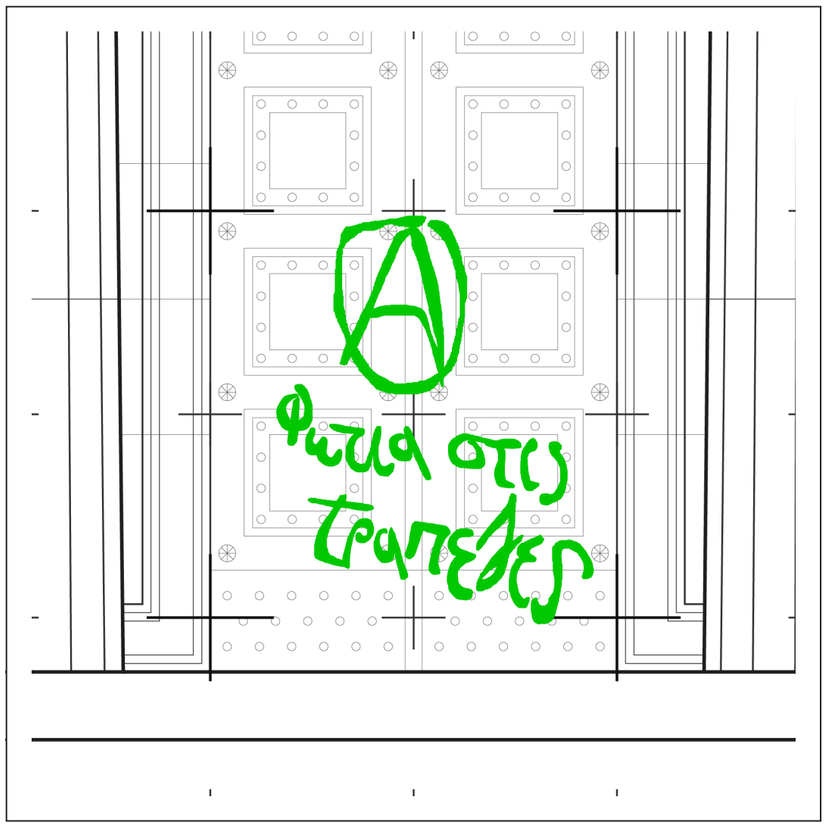
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/6urb200 Last Visit: 26 | 01 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F04



Writing Serial No: #045



Text

Reads: Burn the Banks 'A'
[ΦΩΤΙΑ ΣΤΙΣ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΕΣ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 13 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: A couple walk past the graffiti-covered entrance to the Bank of Greece on February 13, 2012 in Athens, Greece. Following a meeting on Wednesday, finance ministers across the Eurozone are calling for greater scrutiny and oversight of Greece's proposed budget cuts.

Photographer: Oli Scarff (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Green Acrylic Paint
Surface: Golden Wood

Duration

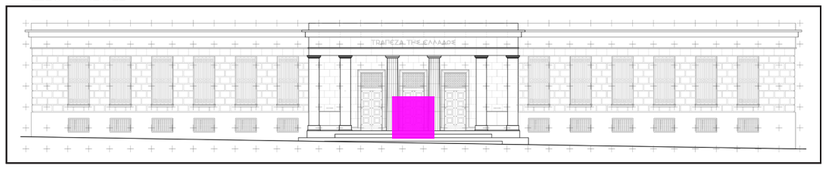
Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012
Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ18 – ζ20

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012
Post Title: Eurozone Finance Ministers Demand Greater Scrutiny Of Greek Budget Cuts.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012
Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/znkq8gx Last Visit: 09 | 12 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F05



Writing Serial No: #046



Text

Reads: Rob To Have Money

[ΛΗΣΤΕΨΕ ΓΙΑ Ν' ΕΧΕΙΣ ΛΕΦΤΑ]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: Grafiti daubed on the wall of the Bank of Greece headquarters in Athens that reads 'Rob to get money'.

Photographer: Stathis Kalligeris (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

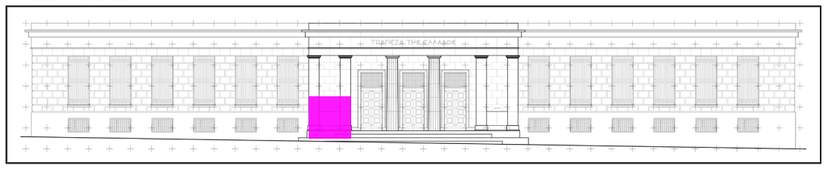
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 15 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: EU purse stays shut till Athens proves fit.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nh336kw Last Visit: 31 | 07 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F06



Writing Serial No: #047



Text

Reads: Cops Will Eat Your Children

[ΜΠΑΤΣΟΙ ΘΑ ΣΑΣ ΦΑΝΕ ΤΑ ΠΑΙΔΙΑ ΣΑΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: A defaced Bank of Greece sign is seen during protests against planned reforms by Greece's coalition government in Athens, February 12, 2012. The grafitti says "cops they will eat your children" (referring to the Bank of Greece sign the grafitti entours).

Photographer: Anthony Derosa

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

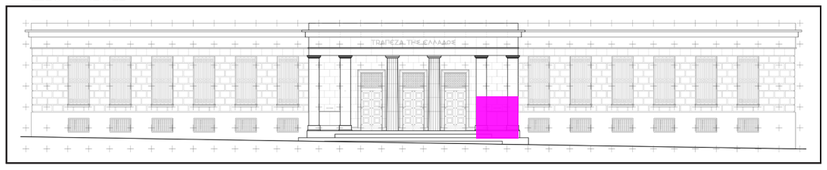
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 12 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Athens, Greek Debt Crisis.

Elevation



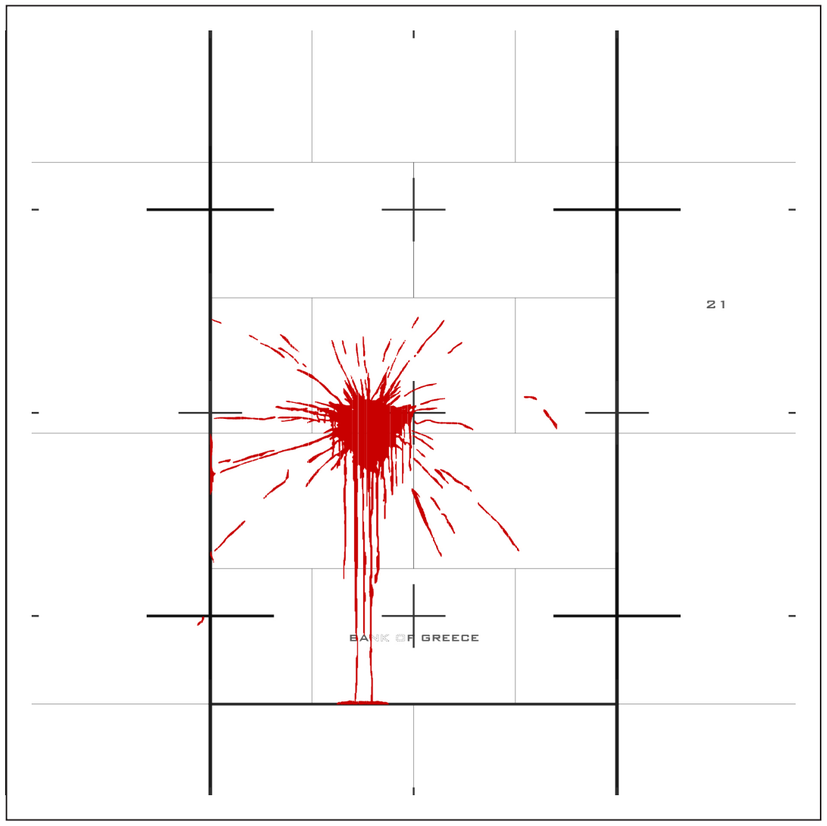
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/ovxro7n Last Visit: 16 | 10 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F07



Writing Serial No: #048



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: A man passes the defaced facade of the Bank of Greece after a night of violence which followed the Greek parliament approval of a deeply unpopular austerity bill in Athens, February 13, 2012. Police said 150 shops were looted in the capital and 48 buildings set ablaze.

Photographer: John Kolesidis (Reuters)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-γ14 – ε16

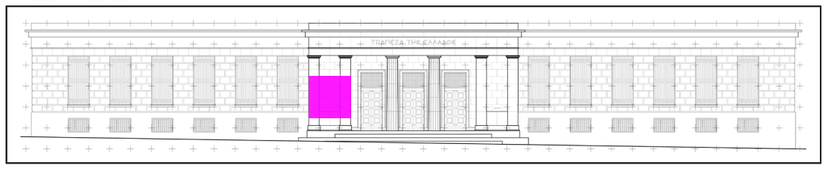
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Economic Protests In Greece Turn Violent.

Elevation



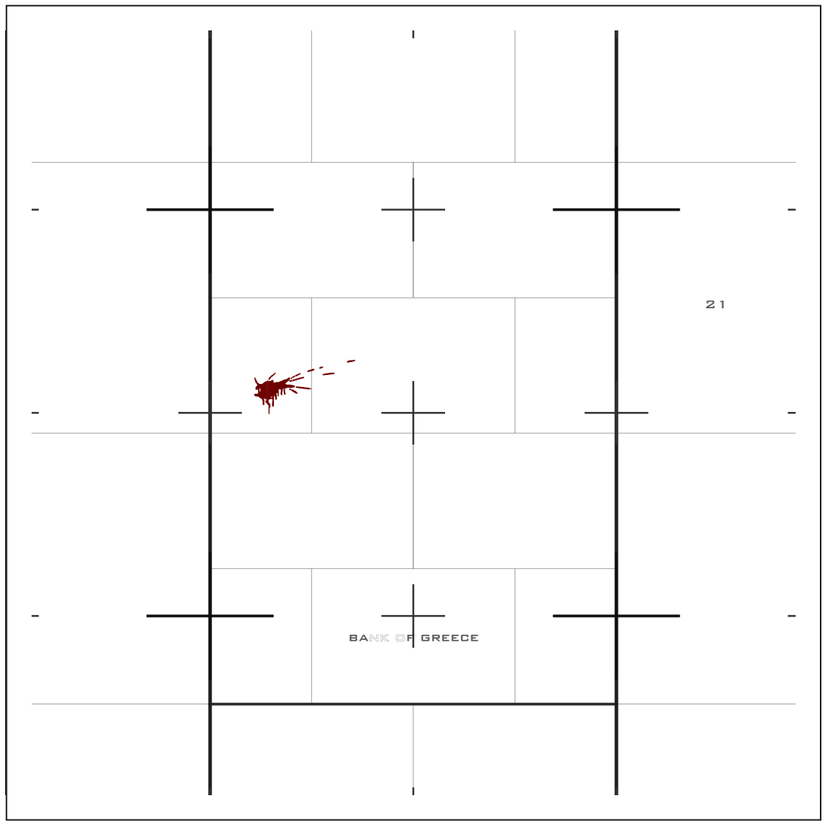
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/7f9ncrv Last Visit: 04 | 12 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F08



Writing Serial No: #049



Text

Reads: --------

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: Angelos Michas

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-γ14 – ε16

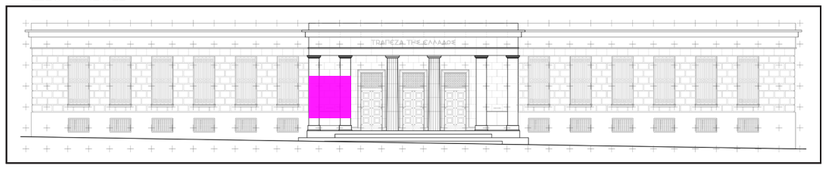
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 18 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Economic Protests In Greece Turn Violent.

Elevation



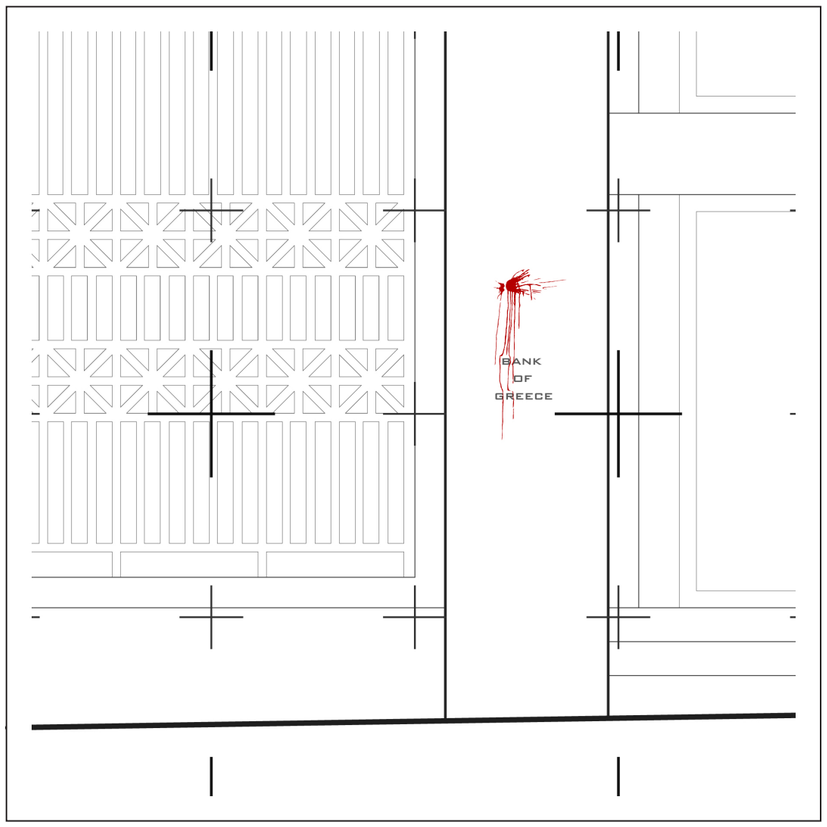
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nb5pqxe Last Visit: 11 | 02 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F09



Writing Serial No: #050



Text

Reads: ---

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: The defaced facade of the Bank of Greece is seen after a night of violence following the Greek parliament approval of a deeply unpopular austerity bill, in Athens.

Photographer: John Kolesidis (Reuters)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ15 – ε17

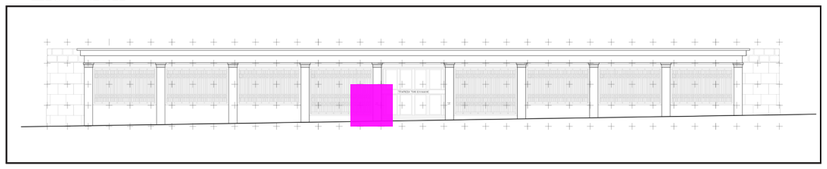
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Greece: As austerity measures take hold Greek unemployment hits record high.

Elevation



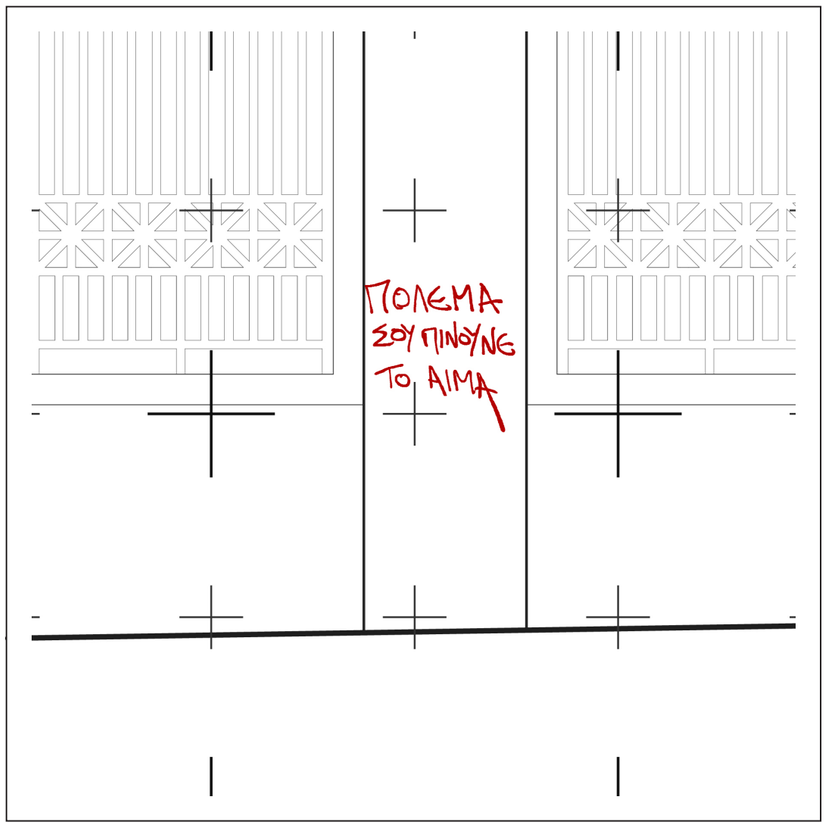
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

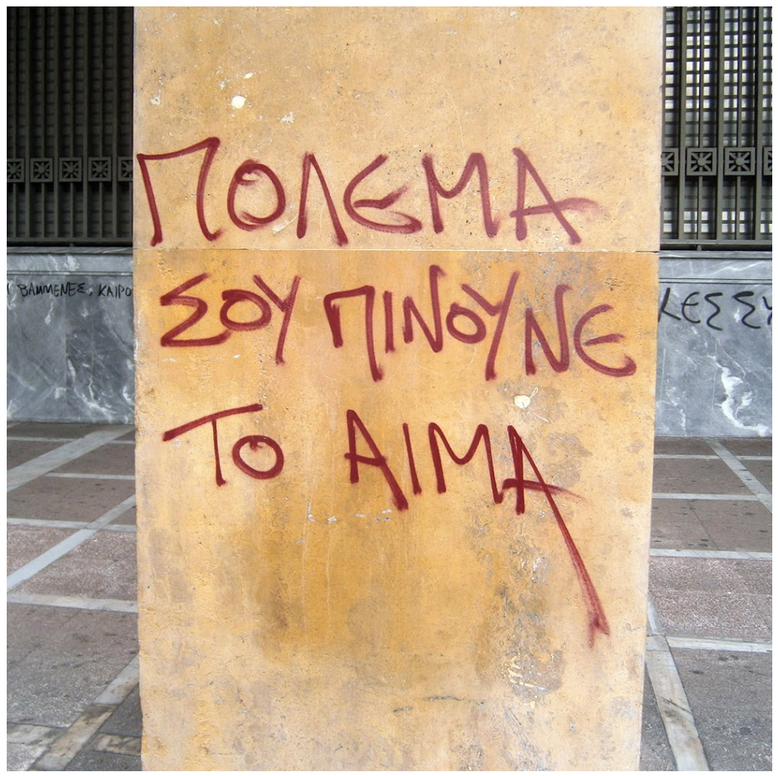
Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/qxq9dr3 Last Visit: 23 | 03 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F10



Writing Serial No: #051



Text

Reads: Fight They Are Sucking Your Blood

[ΠΟΛΕΜΑ ΣΟΥ ΠΙΝΟΥΝΕ ΤΟ ΑΙΜΑ]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrypic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ29 – ε31

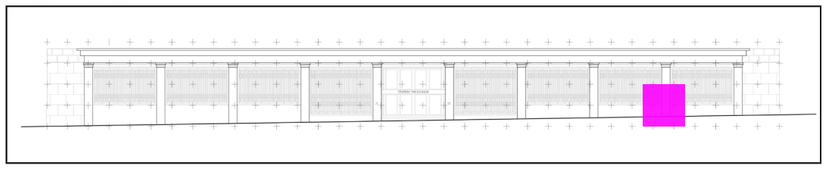
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March.

Elevation



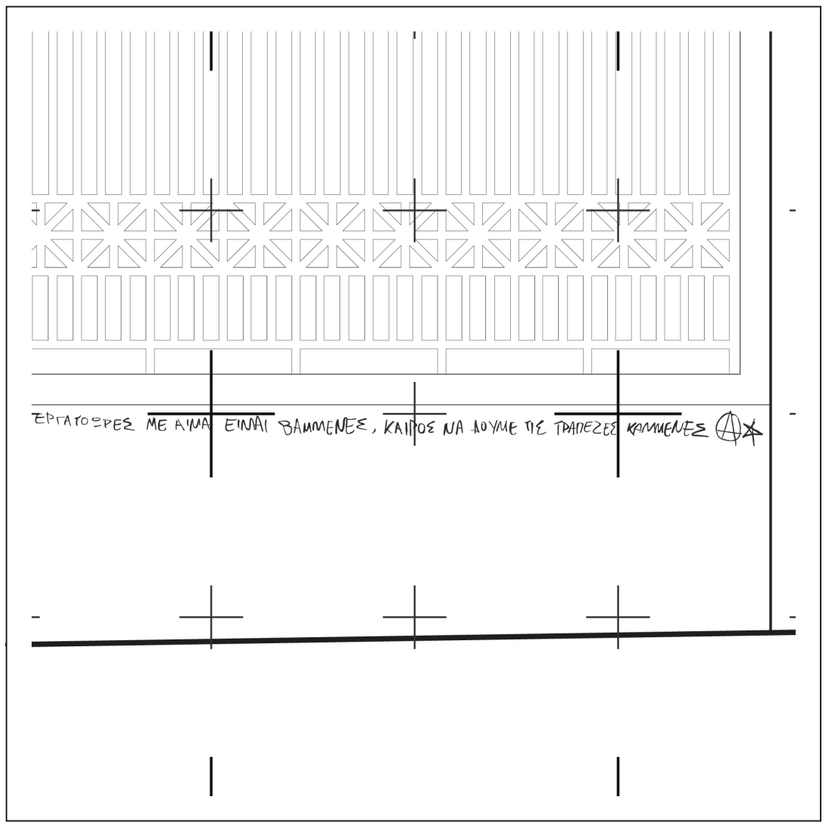
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

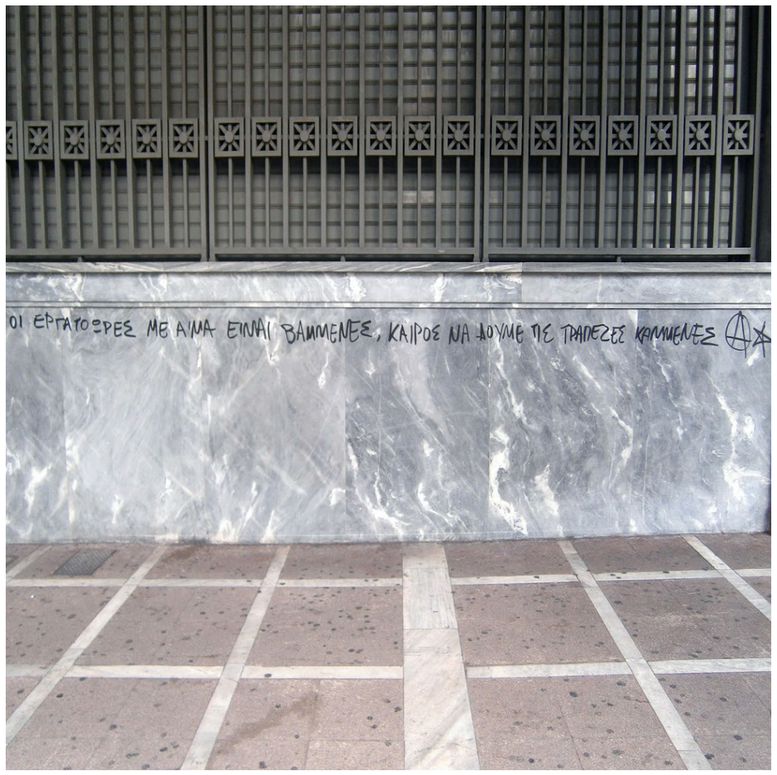
Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jcaf6f2 Last Visit: 28 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F11



Writing Serial No: #052



Text

Reads: Work-Hours Are Painted With Blood, Its Time To See The Banks Burning 'A' *

[ΟΙ ΕΡΓΑΤΟΩΡΕΣ ΜΕ ΑΙΜΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΒΑΜΜΕΝΕΣ, ΚΑΙΡΟΣ ΝΑ ΔΟΥΜΕ ΤΙΣ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΕΣ ΚΑΜΜΕΝΕΣ 'A' *]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Black Permanent Ink

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ28 – ε30

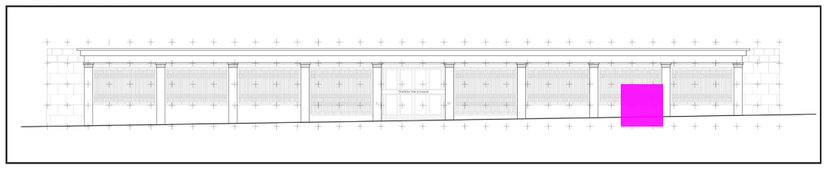
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March.

Elevation



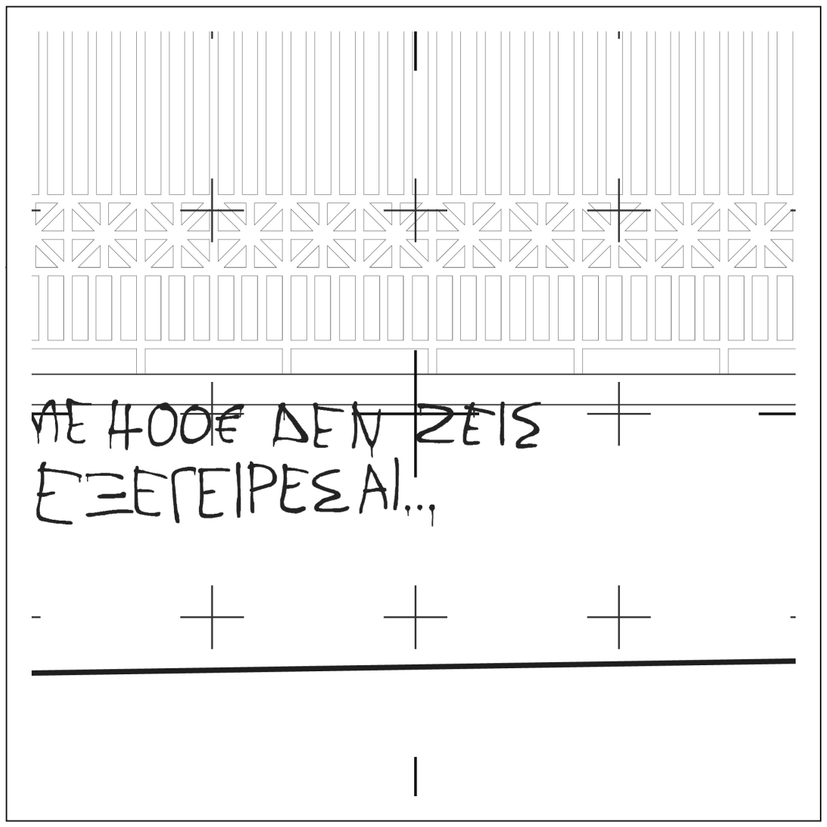
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jcaf6f2 Last Visit: 28 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F12



Writing Serial No: #053



Text

Reads: With 400€ You Do Not Live, You Revolt..

[ΜΕ 400€ ΔΕΝ ΖΕΙΣ ΕΞΕΓΕΙΡΕΣΑΙ...]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: ---------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrypic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ24 - ε26

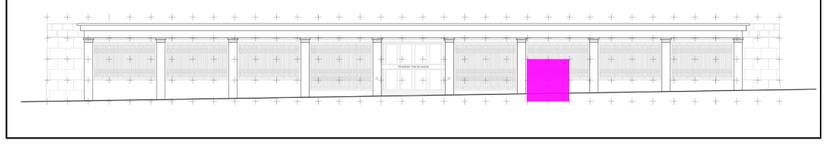
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March.

Elevation



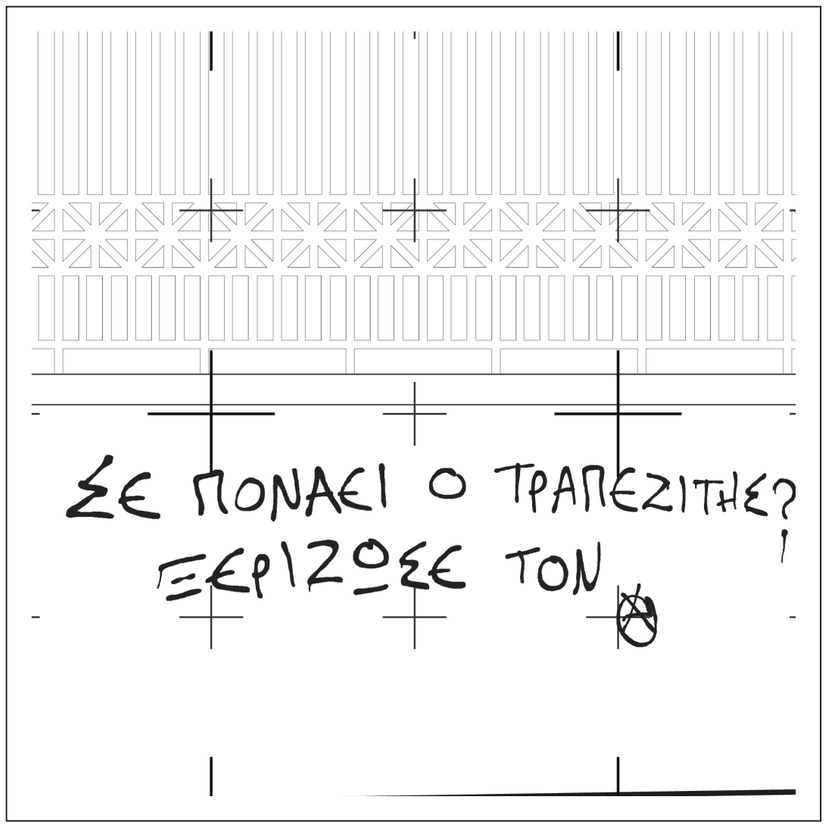
Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jcaf6f2 Last Visit: 28 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F13



Writing Serial No: #054



Text

Reads: Is Your Grinder Tooth [Banker] In Pain? Take It Off 'A'

[ΣΕ ΠΟΝΑΕΙ Ο ΤΡΑΠΕΖΙΤΗΣ? ΞΕΡΙΖΩΣΕ ΤΟΝ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 13 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: An Athens municipality employee tries to clean up slogans written on the walls. Slogan says "If a grinder tooth is in pain, then take it off".

Photographer: Kostas Pikoulas (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrypic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ03 – ε05

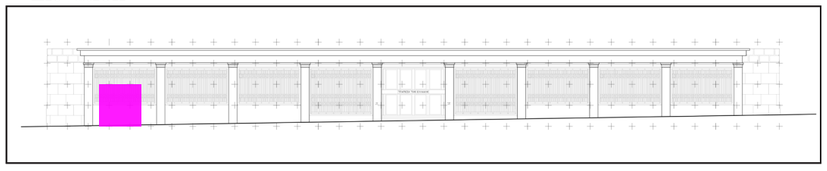
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Athens tries to return to everyday life after the riots.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/pbdpbzy Last Visit: 16 | 11 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #F14



Writing Serial No: #055



Text

Reads: Reserve Mat And Haircut Di.As. 'A'

[ΕΦΕΔΡΕΙΑ ΣΤΑ ΜΑΤ ΚΟΥΡΕΜΑ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΔΙ.ΑΣ. 'Α']*

*'Reverve' And 'Haircut' Refeer to the Planned Austerity Cuts.

'Mat' is the Acronym of 'Units for the Reinstatement of Order'

'Di.As.' or 'Vehicle Policing Team'

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 02 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrypic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Erasure Date: 13 | 02 | 2012

Grid Location: I-ε08 – η12

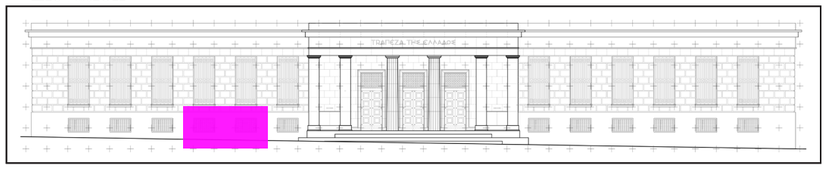
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Photos of the Anarchist March.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 12 | 02 | 2012

Event Nature: 48h strikes and mass demonstrations result to extensive damages in urban fabric.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jcaf6f2 Last Visit: 28 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set No: G

Duration

Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012
Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

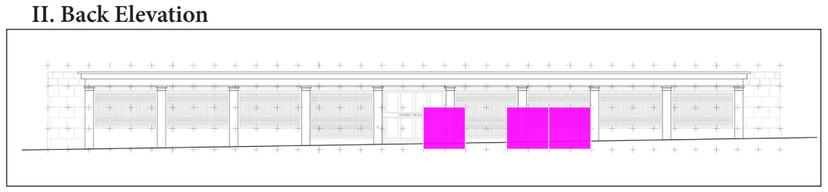
Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012
Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: H

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012
Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

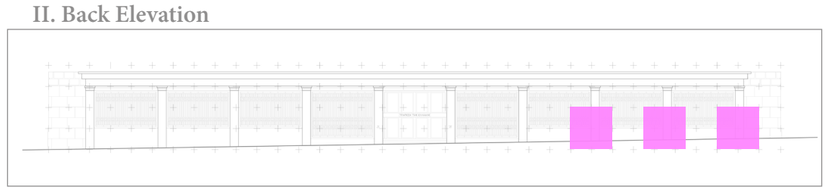
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012
Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

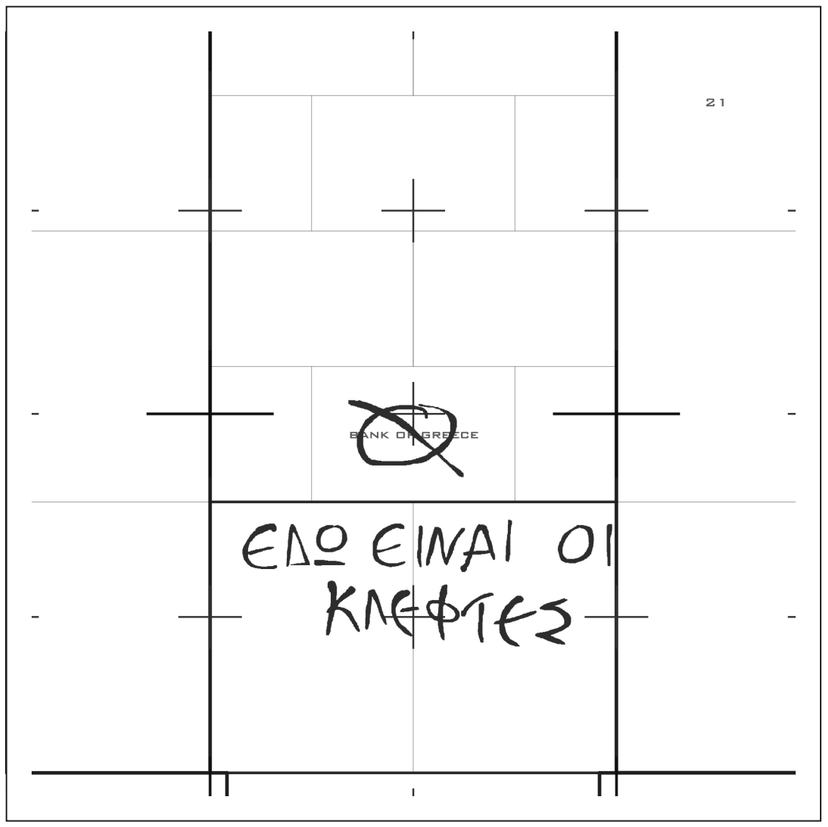
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #601



Writing Serial No: #056



Text

Reads: The Thieves Are Here

[ΕΔΩ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΟΙ ΚΛΕΦΤΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 26 | 09 | 2012

Image Caption: A Greek riot Police officer passes graffiti on the Bank of Greece, translated it says 'Here are the Thieves', in Athens, Greece. 25,000 people marched through central Athens to Parliament to protest the austerity cuts brought in due to the crippling debt the country is under.

Photographer: Milos Bicanski (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrypic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

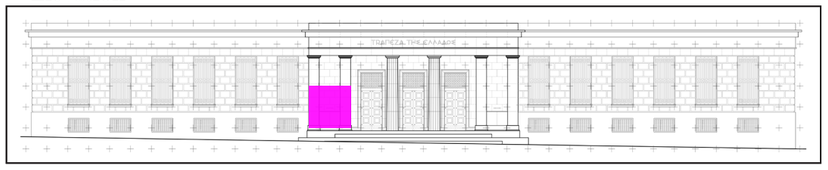
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Greeks March In Protest To Austerity Cuts.

Elevation



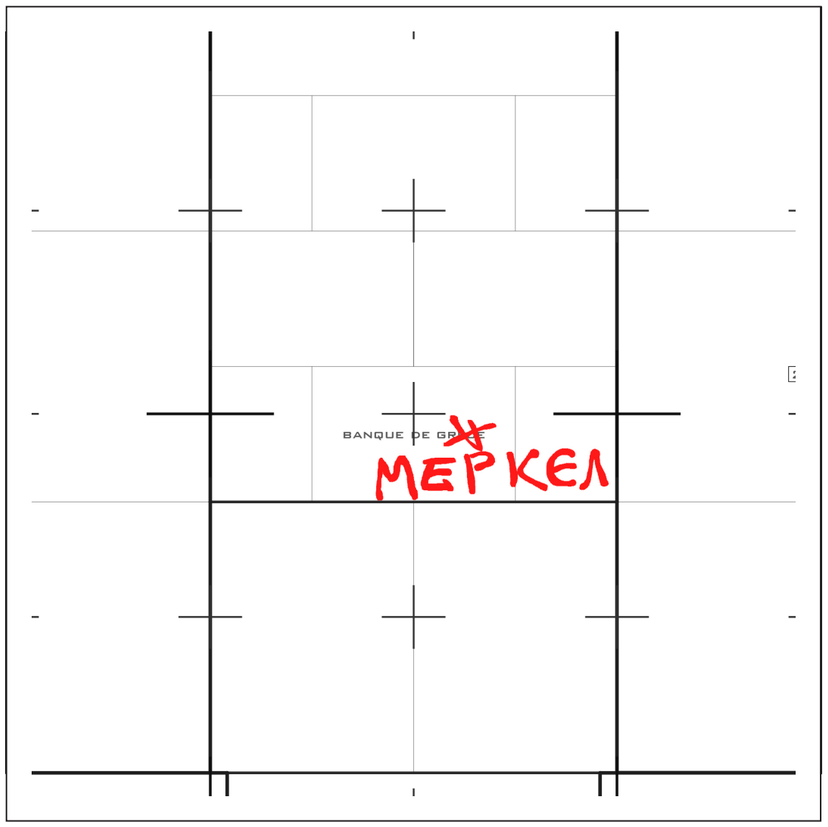
Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/j24zmfv Last Visit: 30 | 09 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #602



Writing Serial No: #057



Text

Reads: (Banque De ~~Grece~~) Merkel

[(BANQUE DE ~~GRECE~~) MEPKEΛ]

Image

Date Taken: 26 | 09 | 2012

Image Caption: A riot policeman stands in front of Bank of Greece beside graffiti that reads: "Bank of Merkel - Their riches our blood" during a nationwide general strike in Athens, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2012.

Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis (AP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrypic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

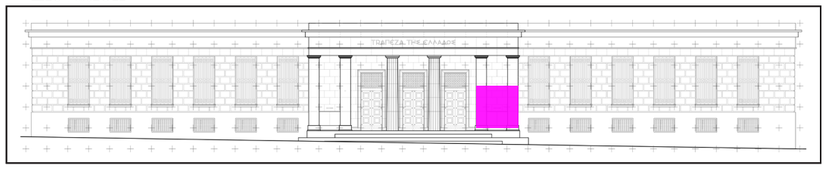
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Hostile Greeks brace for Merkel's visit.

Elevation



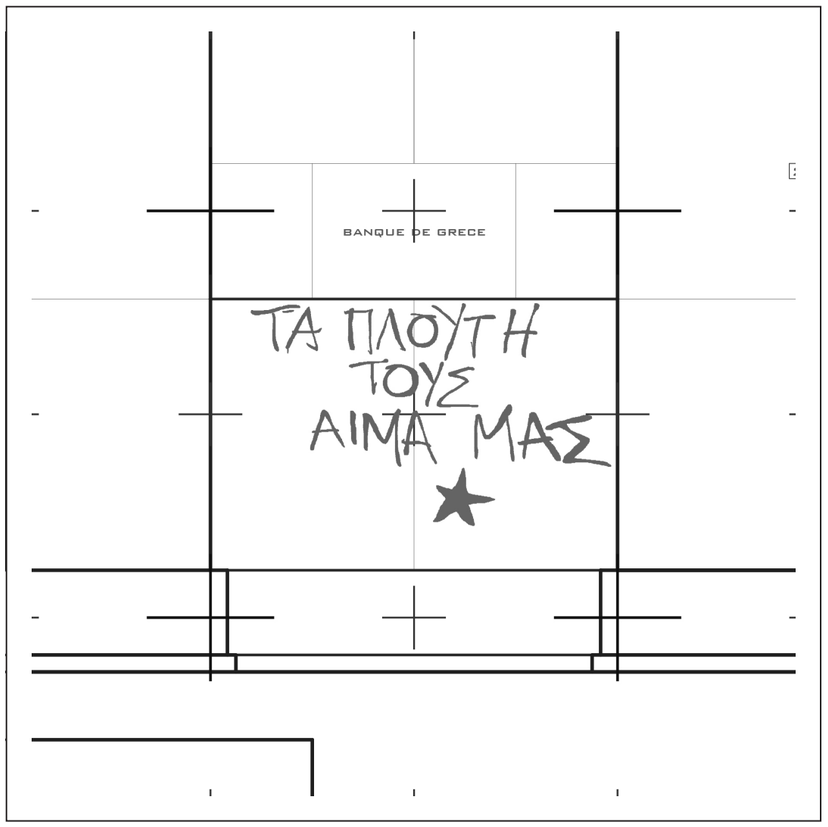
Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/py6tfcg Last Visit: 28 | 01 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #603



Writing Serial No: #058



Text

Reads: Their Riches Our Blood *
[ΤΑ ΠΛΟΥΤΗ ΤΟΥΣ ΤΟ ΑΙΜΑ ΜΑΣ *]

Image

Date Taken: 26 | 09 | 2012
Image Caption: A man stands next to the Bank of Greece sign, where the word 'Greece' was spraypainted over and the word 'Merkel' written below, in central Athens on September 27, 2012. Graffiti below the sign reads "their wealth, our blood".
Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Grey Acrypic Paint
Surface: White Marble

Duration

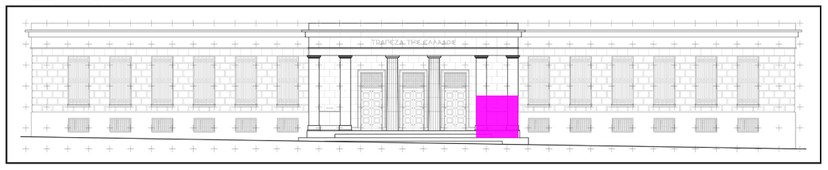
Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012
Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012
Post Title: World in focus

Elevation

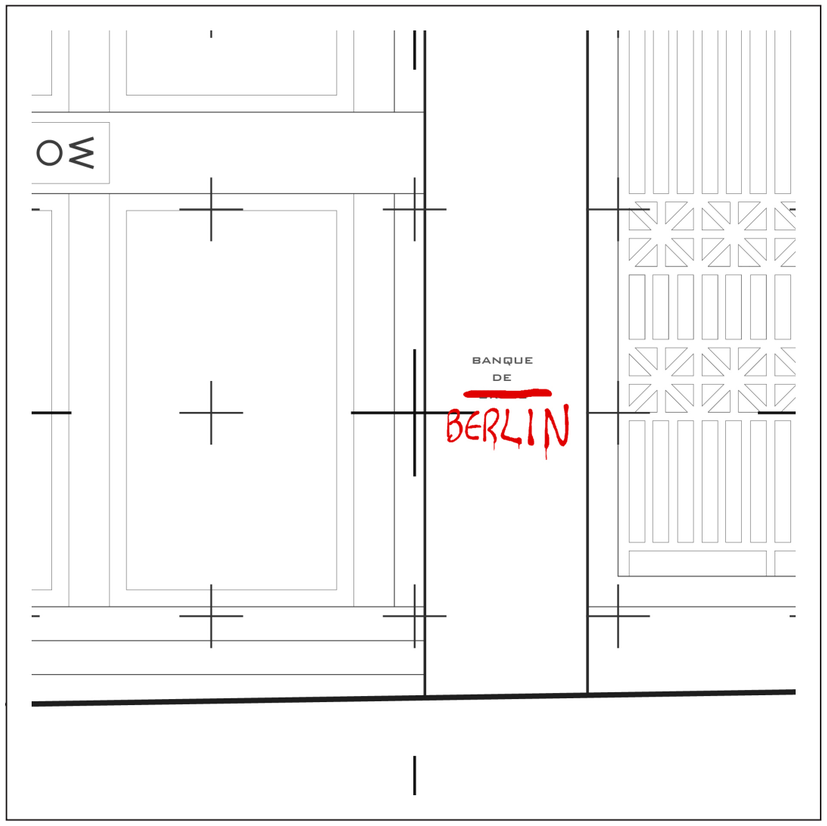


Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012
Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/pbymx9e Last Visit: 26 | 01 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #604



Writing Serial No: #059



Text

Reads: (Banque De ~~Grece~~) Berlin

Image

Date Taken: 27 | 09 | 2012

Image Caption: Black and red paint is on the marble of the Bank of Greece as protesters, wrote "Bank of Berlin" during clashes in Athens.

Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis (AP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrypic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

Grid Location: II-y19 – ε21

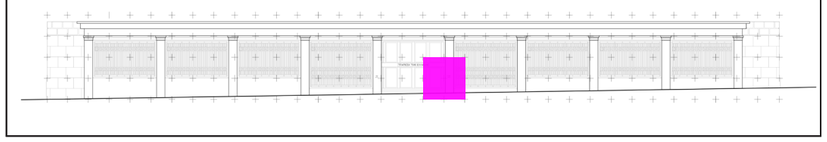
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Thousands riot as Greece approves austerity bill (Photo Essay).

Elevation



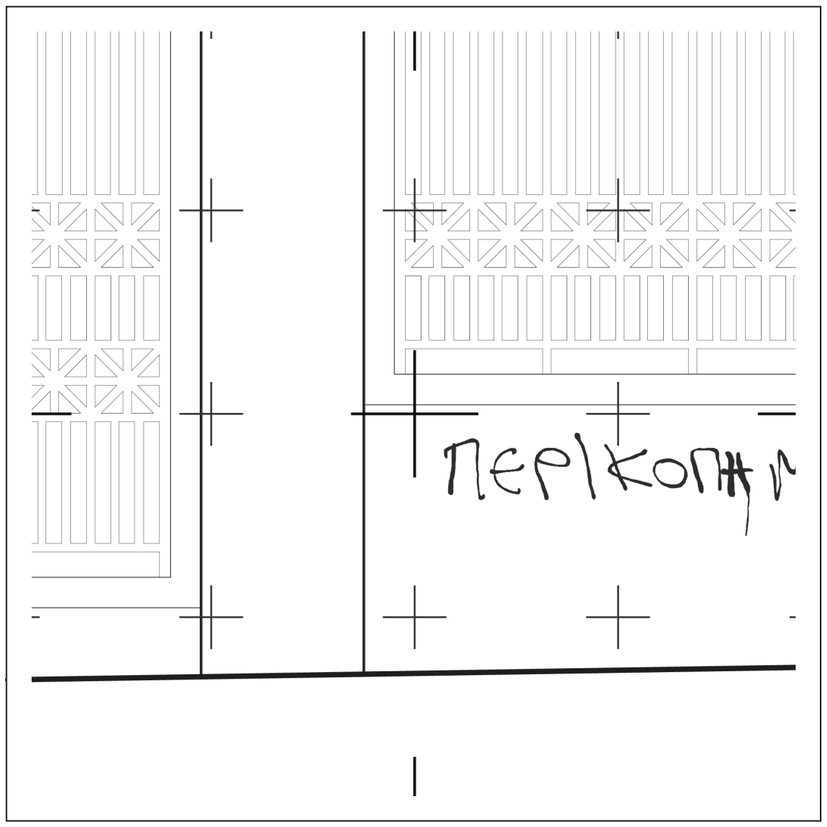
Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/o8lbbhc Last Visit: 04 | 06 | 2013

Writing Set/Sequence No: #605



Writing Serial No: #060



Text

Reads: Wage Cuts to the Bosses

[ΠΕΡΙΚΟΠΗ ΜΙΣΘΩΝ ΣΤΙΣ ΤΑΞΗΣ ΤΑΞΕΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΑΦΕΝΤΙΚΩΝ]

Image

Date Taken: 28 | 09 | 2012

Image Caption: An employee cleans up slogans written on the walls of the Bank of Greece heaquarters on Sept 28, 2012, in Athens, Greece. Slogan says "Wage cuts to the bosses."

Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Grey Acrypic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

Grid Location: II-y23 - e27

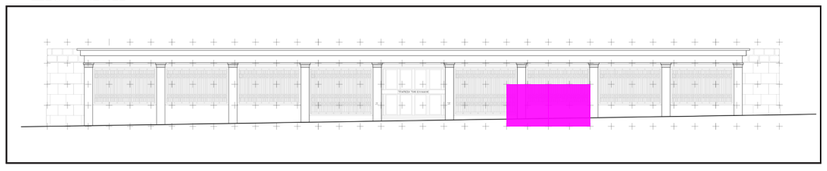
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 02 | 2012

Post Title: Rerurning to normality after days of protests (Photos).

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/o4llbjw Last Visit: 09 | 12 | 2014

Writing Set No: G

Duration

Writing Date: 26 | 09 | 2012
Erasure Date: 28 | 09 | 2012

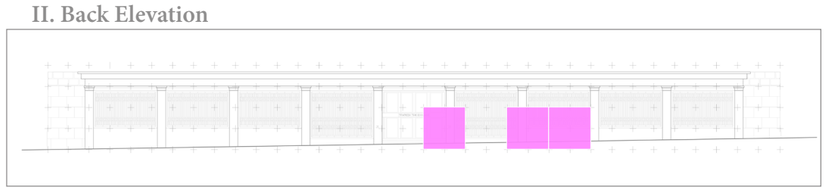
Event

Event Date: 26 | 09 | 2012
Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with large protests.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: H

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012
Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

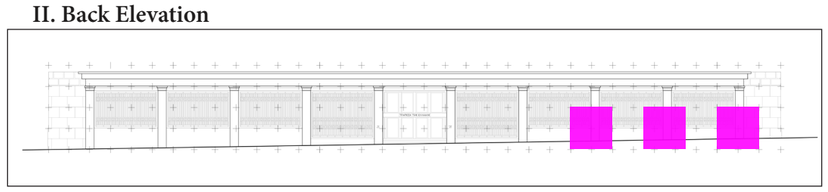
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012
Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

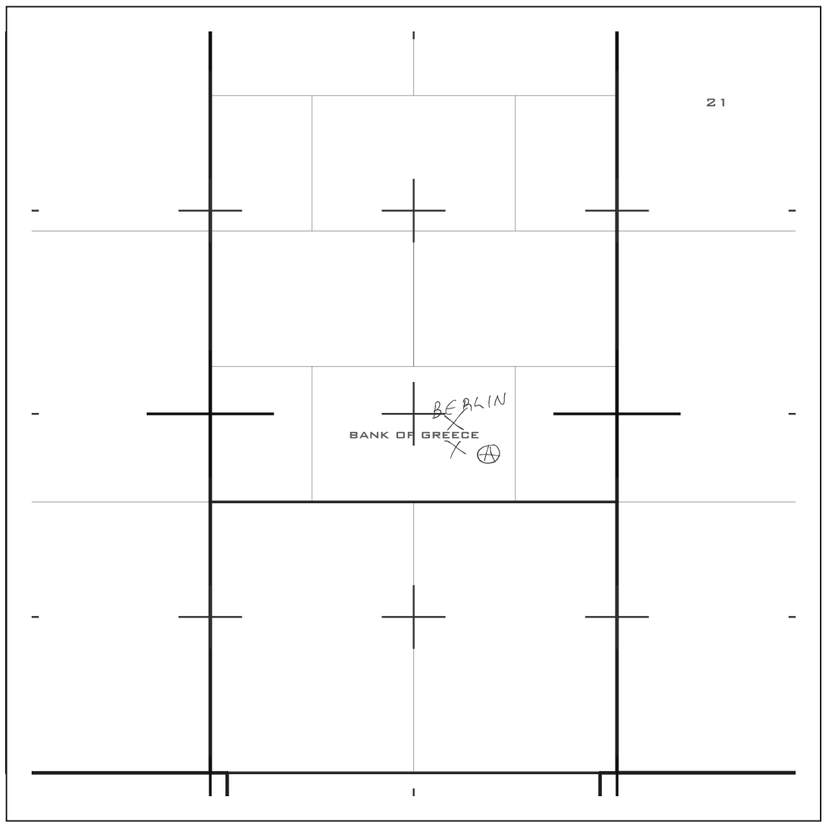
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #H01



Writing Serial No: #061



Text

Reads: (Bank Of ~~Greece~~) Berlin 'A'

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: A pedestrian walks past graffiti covering the sign to the central bank of Greece, changed to read ' Bank of Berlin' following demonstrations in Athens, Greece, on Wednesday, Nov 7, 2012.

Photographer: Simon Dawson (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Black Permanent Ink

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

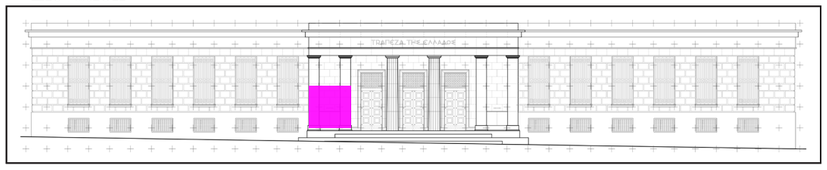
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 08 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Demonstrations Take Place Across Greece.

Elevation



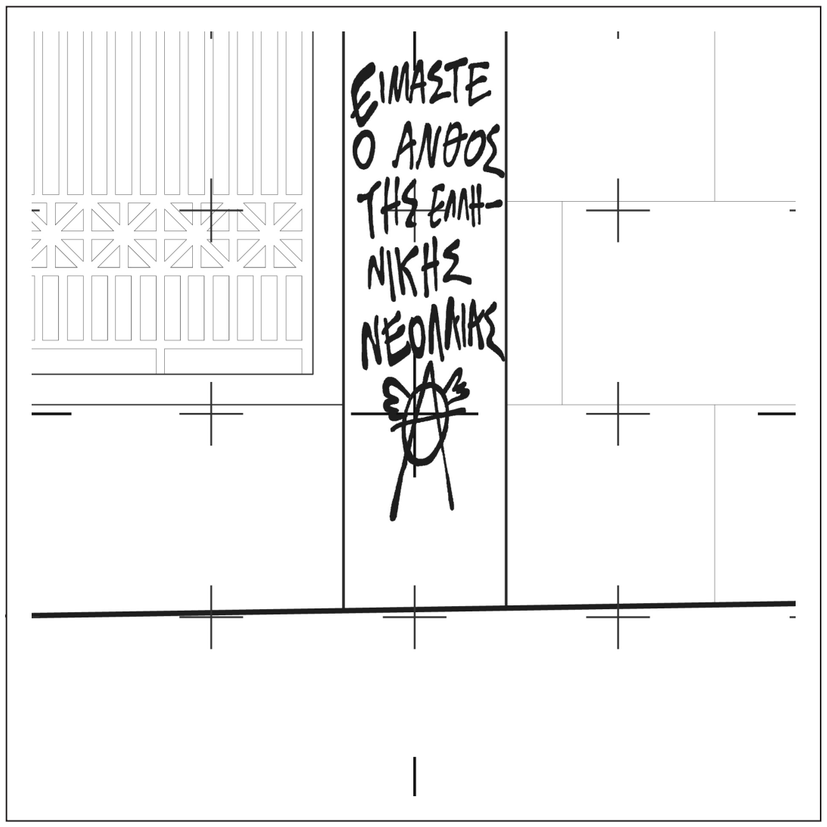
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/z4yzagc Last Visit: 24 | 02 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #H02



Writing Serial No: #062



Text

Reads: We Are The Blossom Of Greek Youth 'A'

[ΕΙΜΑΣΤΕ Ο ΑΝΘΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΝΕΟΛΑΙΑΣ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: Pedestrians walk past graffiti on a column outside the Greek central bank reading 'We are the blossom of Greek youth' on the second day of a 48-hour general strike in Athens, Greece, on Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2012.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ33 - ε35

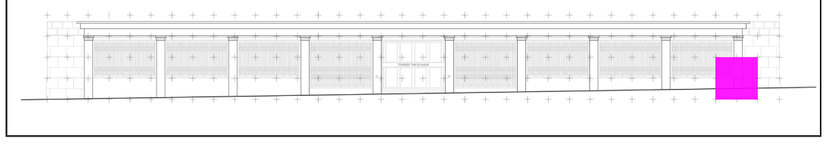
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 07 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Greek Workers Strike As Parliament Votes On Austerity Cuts.

Elevation



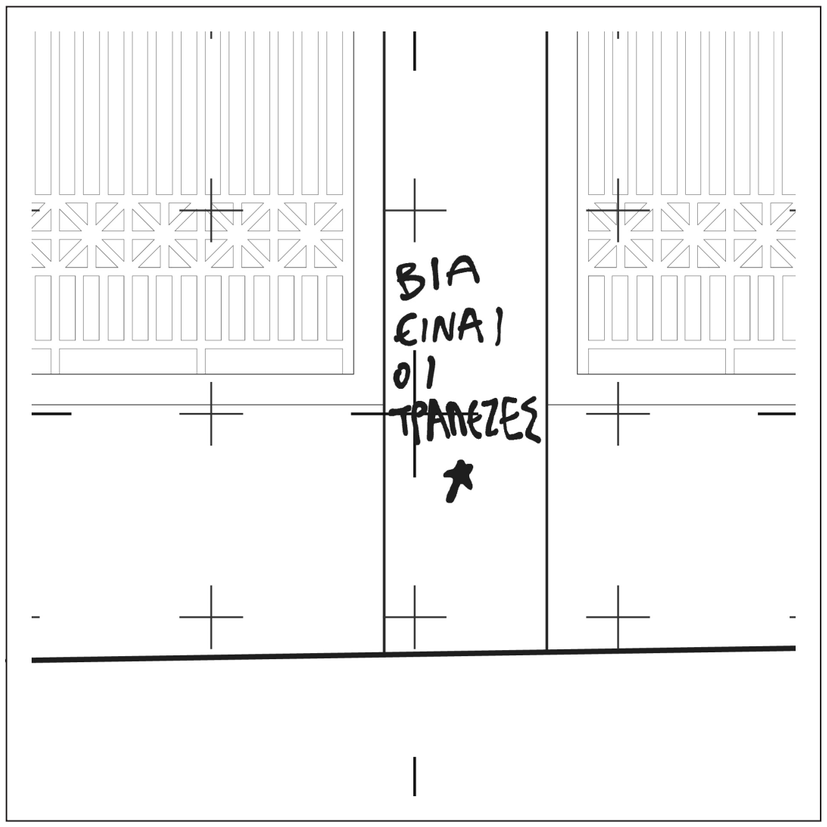
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/h3n55k6 Last Visit: 19 | 06 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #H03



Writing Serial No: #063



Text

Reads: Violent Are The Banks *

[BIA EINAI OI TRAPEZES *]

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: A pedestrian passes anti-bank graffiti written on a pillar outside the Greek central bank on the second day of a 48-hour general strike in Athens, Greece, on Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2012.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ26 – ε28

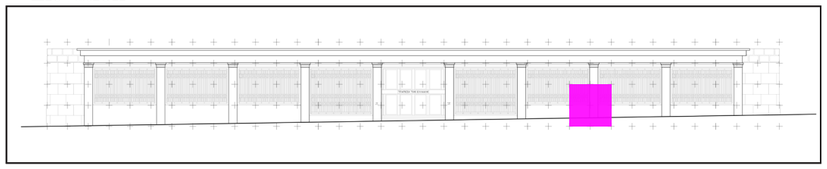
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 07 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Greek Workers Strike As Parliament Votes On Austerity Cuts.

Elevation



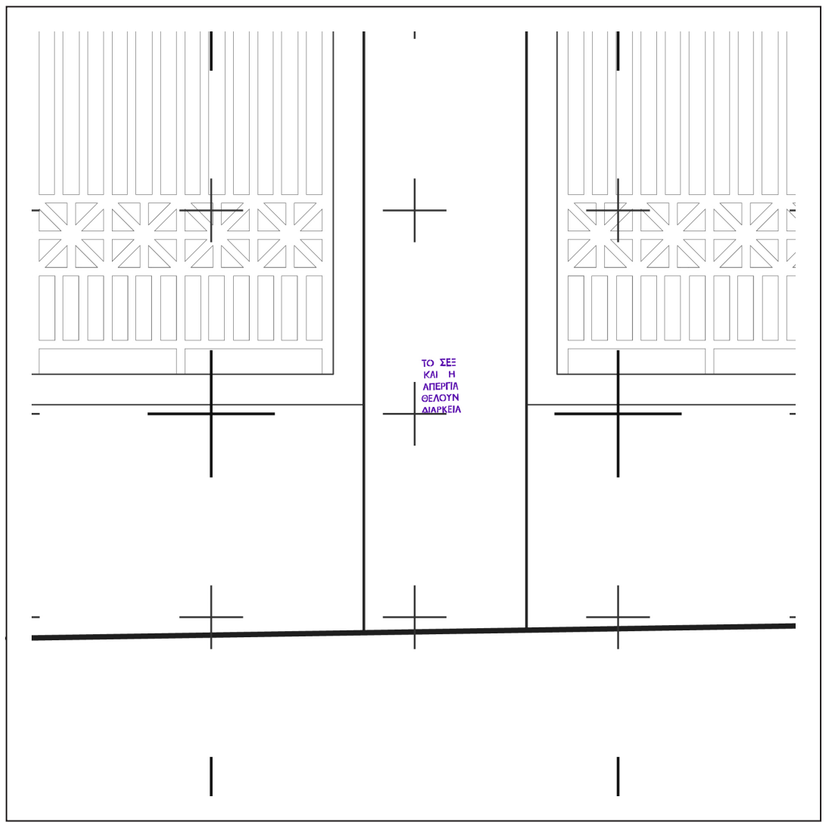
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hkogg3f Last Visit: 19 | 06 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #H04



Writing Serial No: #064



Text

Reads: Sex And Strike Need Duration

[ΤΟ ΣΕΞ ΚΑΙ Η ΑΠΕΡΓΙΑ ΘΕΛΟΥΝ ΔΙΑΡΚΕΙΑ]

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: A woman passes by a graffiti against 'bankers and Nazis' outside the headquarters of bank of Greece in central Athens on November 7, 2012 during a 48-hour general strike.

Photographer: Panayiotis Tzamaros (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Purple Acrylic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ29 – ε31

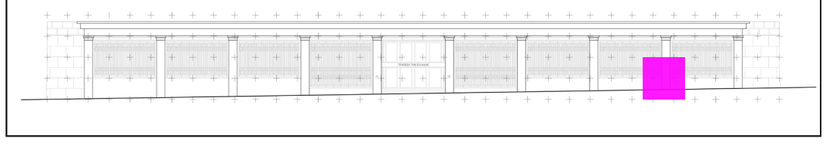
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 07 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Greek Workers Strike As Parliament Votes On Austerity Cuts.

Elevation



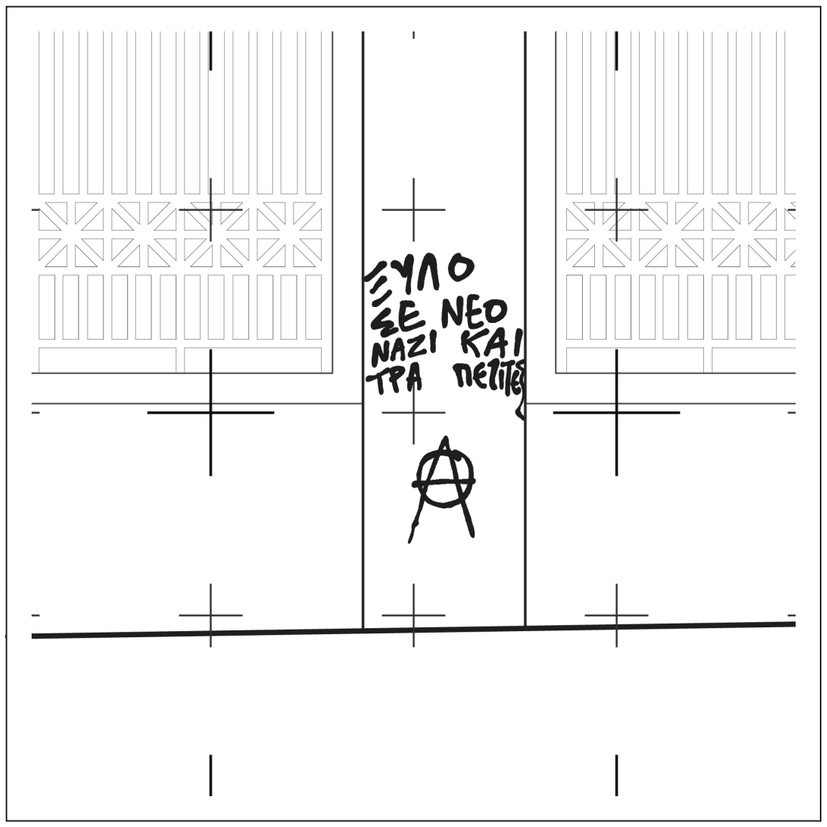
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jpv7fug Last Visit: 19 | 06 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #H05



Writing Serial No: #065



Text

Reads: Beat Neonazis And Bankers 'A'

[ΞΥΛΟ ΣΕ ΝΕΟΝΑΖΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΙΤΕΣ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: A woman passes by a graffiti against 'bankers and Nazis' outside the headquarters of bank of Greece in central Athens on November 7, 2012 during a 48-hour general strike.

Photographer: Panayiotis Tzamaros (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 10 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ29 – ε31

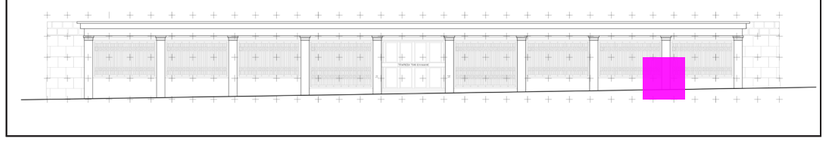
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 07 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Greek Workers Strike As Parliament Votes On Austerity Cuts.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Large demonstrations as Greek parliament approves new austerity measures.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jpv7fug

Last Visit: 19 | 06 | 2014

Writing Set No: I

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012
Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

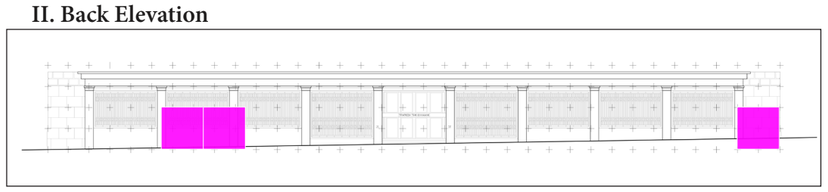
Event

Event Date: 24 | 11 | 2012
Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: I

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013
Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

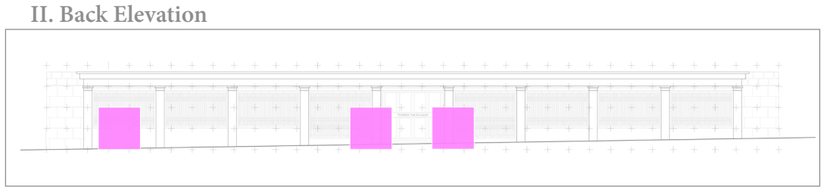
Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013
Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

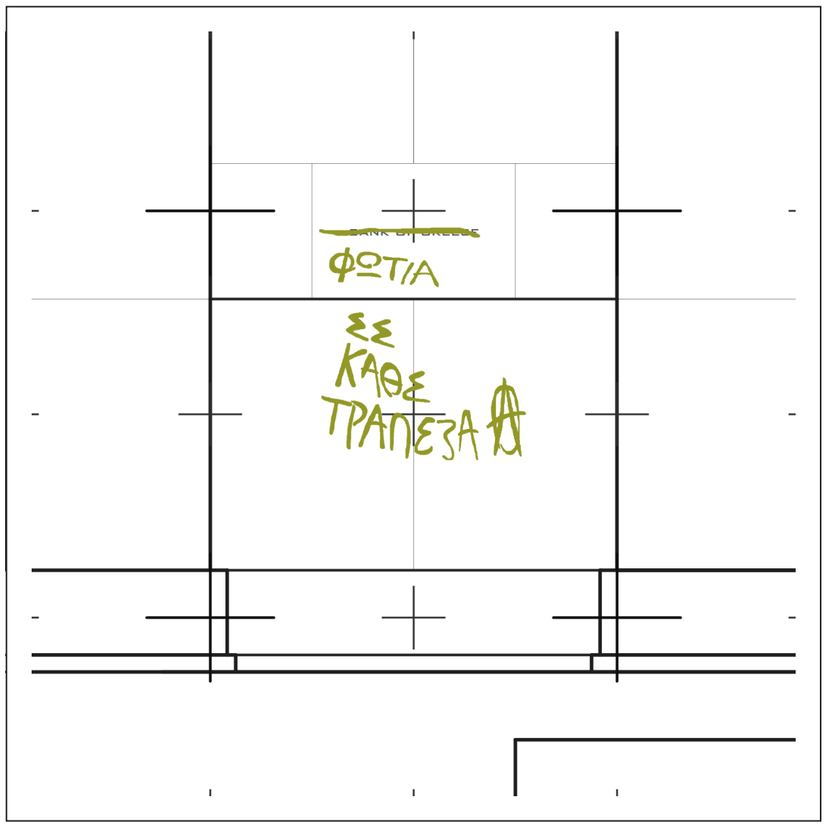
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #101



Writing Serial No: #066



Text

Reads: ~~(Bank Of Greece)~~ Burn Every Bank 'A'

[~~(Bank Of Greece)~~ ΦΩΤΙΑ ΣΕ ΚΑΘΕ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑ 'A']

Image

Date Taken: 25 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: Spray on Bank of Greece sign reads, "Burn every bank"

Photographer: Nikolas Georgiou (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Green Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

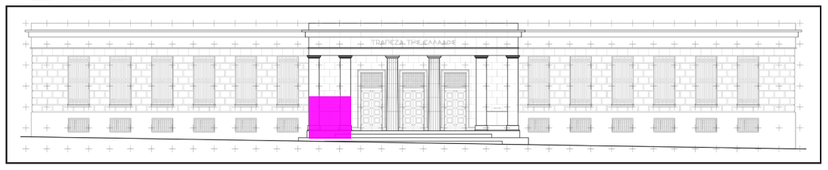
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 25 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Leftists march in Athens against the rising of fascism in Greece.

Elevation



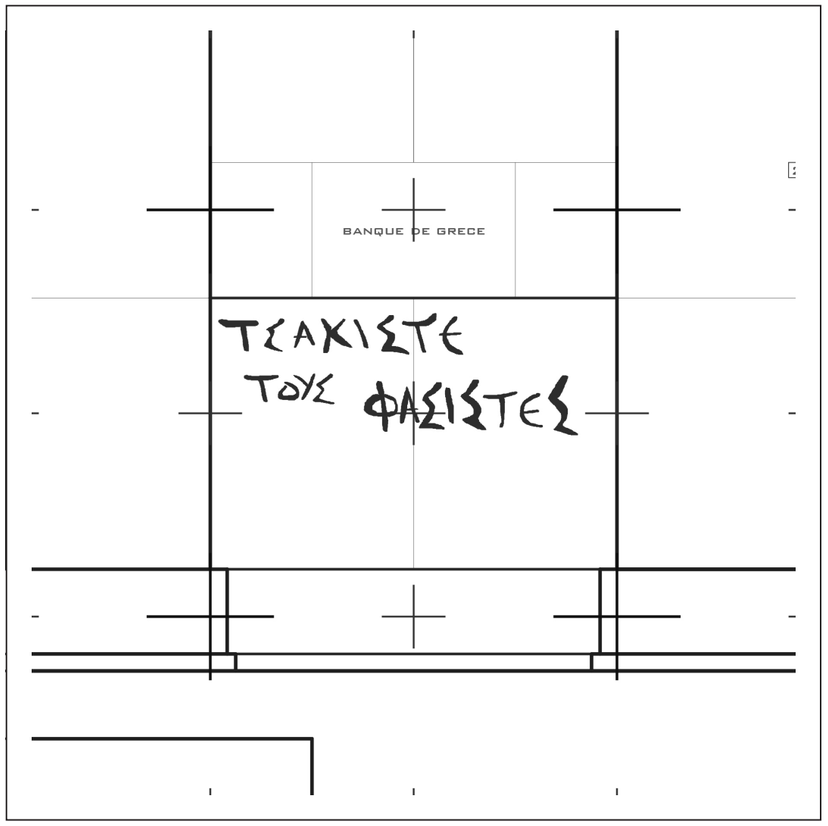
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/o7l5vdb Last Visit: 03 | 11 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #102



Writing Serial No: #067



Text

Reads: Smash The Fascists

[ΤΣΑΚΙΣΤΕ ΤΟΥΣ ΦΑΣΙΣΤΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 25 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: Graffiti have to be removed on a daily basis.

Photographer: Dasza

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

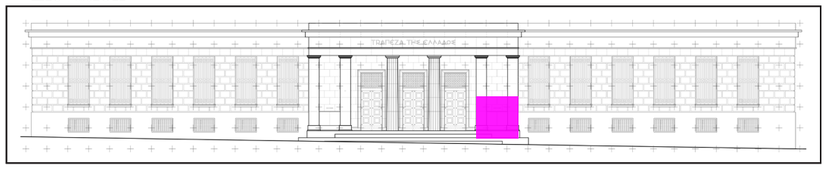
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 08 | 12 | 2012

Post Title: Witnessing Crisis.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/nr8xzuu Last Visit: 08 | 12 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #103



Writing Serial No: #068



Text

Reads: Your Couch Is Your Accomplice

[Ο ΚΑΝΑΠΕΣ ΣΟΥ Η ΣΥΝΕΝΟΧΗ ΣΟΥ]

Image

Date Taken: 26 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: I-ε01 – η03

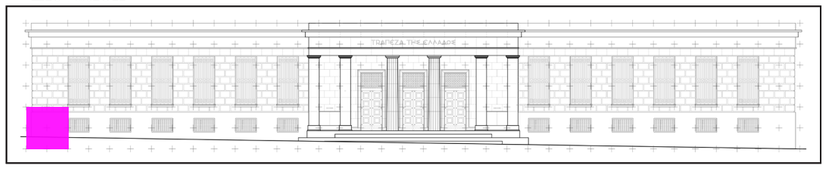
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 28 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Slogans on the walls.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zay48w6 Last Visit: 13 | 01 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #104



Writing Serial No: #069



Text

Reads: Solidarity To The Immigrants

[ΑΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΜΕΤΑΝΑΣΤΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 26 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: A municipal worker is cleaning a wall from a graffiti. A bitter orange tree next to the Bank of Greece HQ has flourished.

Photographer: Kostas Kallergis (Bbc)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: II-γ34 - ε36

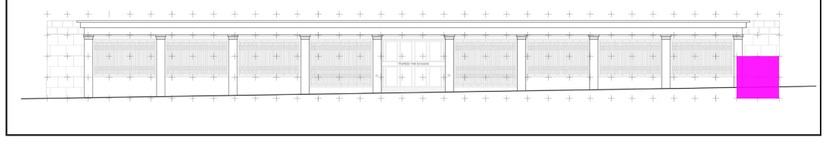
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 21 | 12 | 2012

Post Title: Signs of the times.

Elevation



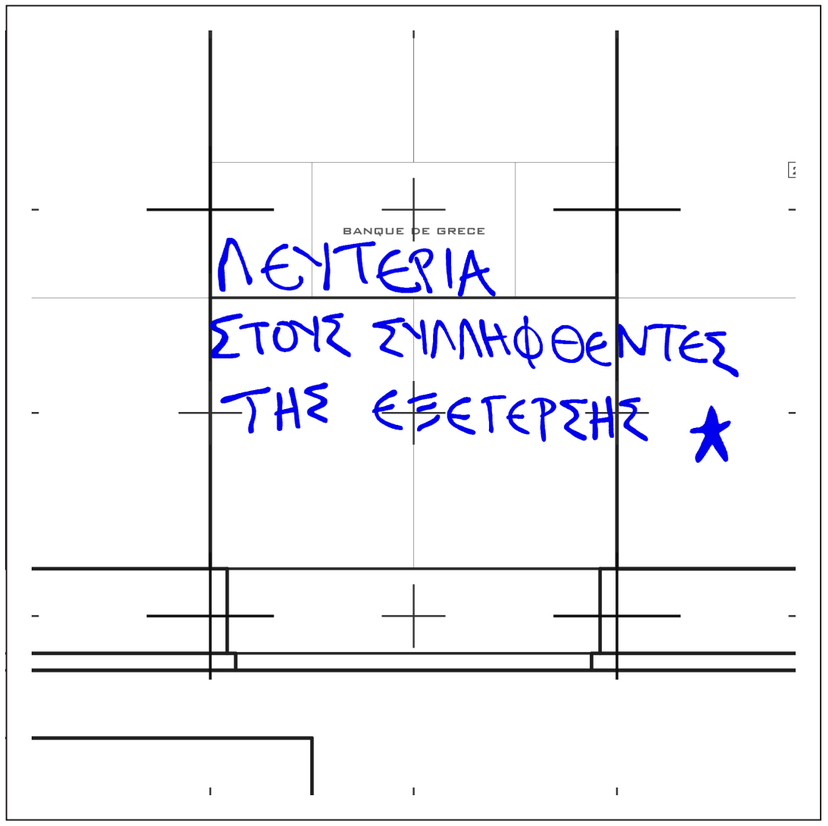
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hw9hzrn Last Visit: 09 | 06 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #105



Writing Serial No: #070



Text

Reads: Freedom To The Prisoners Of The Uprising *

[ΛΕΥΤΕΡΙΑ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΣΥΛΛΗΦΘΕΝΤΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΞΕΓΕΡΣΗΣ *]

Image

Date Taken: 24 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: Mary Tzempelikou

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: BlueAcrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

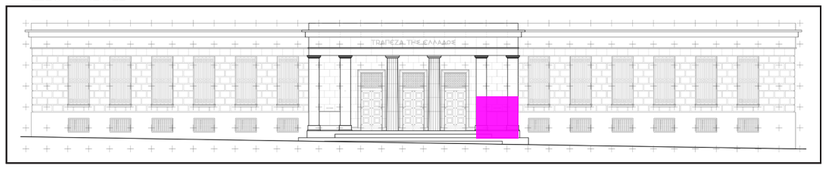
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 24 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: ---------

Elevation



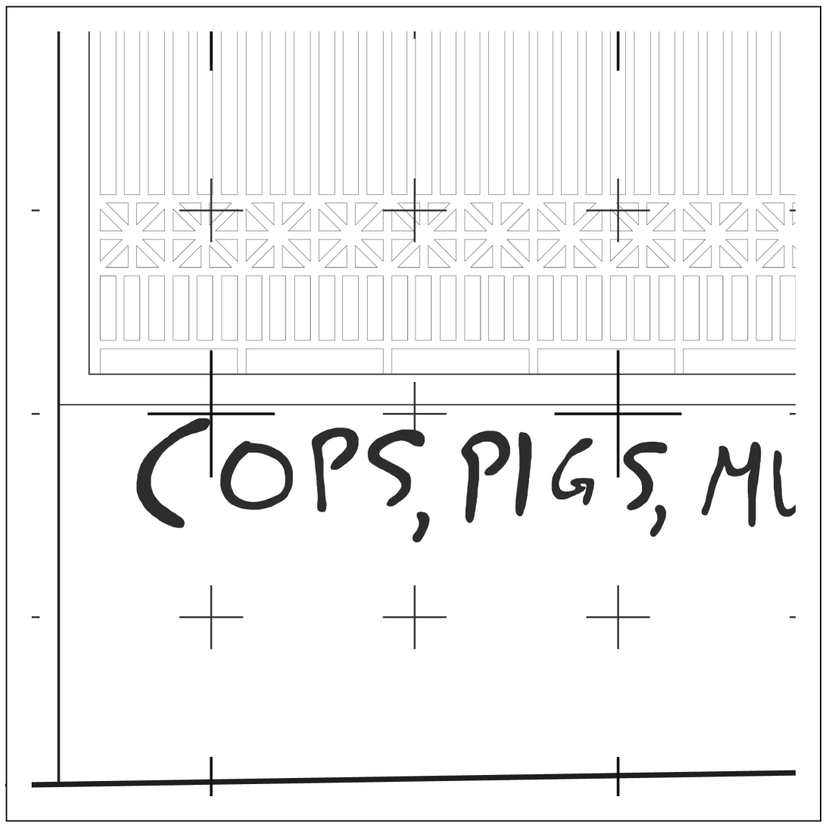
Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

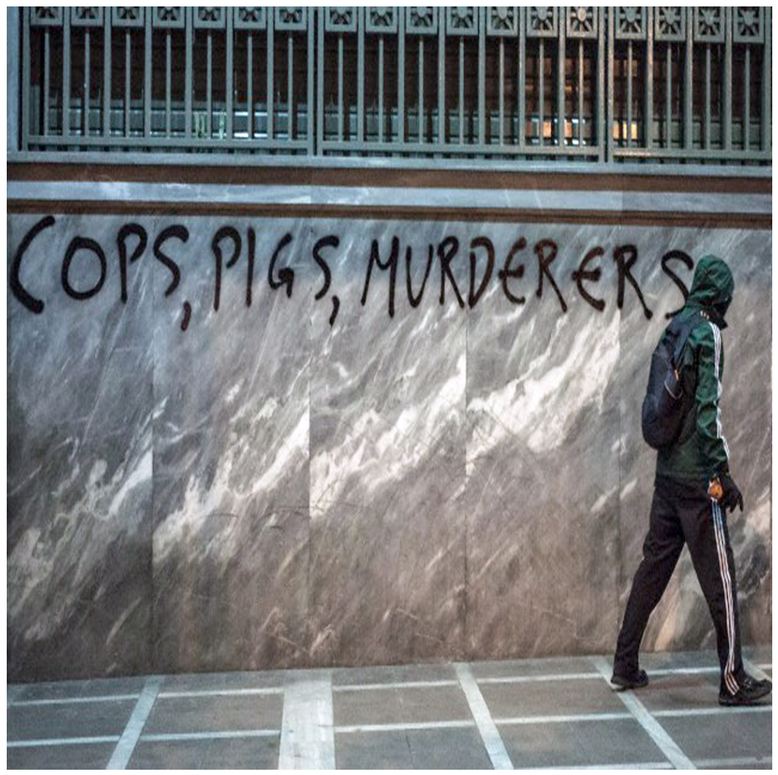
Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/z28clpp Last Visit: 22 | 02 | 2014

Writing Set/Sequence No: #106



Writing Serial No: #071



Text

Reads: Cops, Pigs, Murderers

Image

Date Taken: 24 | 11 | 2012

Image Caption: Athens, Greece. 24th Nov. 2012. A man sprays "Cops, Pigs, Murderers" during an anti-racist rally in Athens.

Photographer: Stathis Kalligeris (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012

Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

Grid Location: II-y06 – ε08

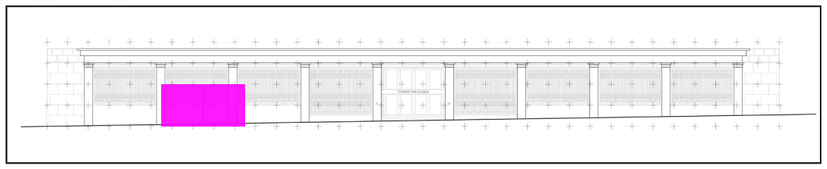
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 24 | 11 | 2012

Post Title: Anti-racist Demo in Athens.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 07 | 11 | 2012

Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hgyjczs Last Visit: 09 | 03 | 2015

Writing Set No: I

Duration

Writing Date: 24 | 11 | 2012
Erasure Date: 26 | 11 | 2012

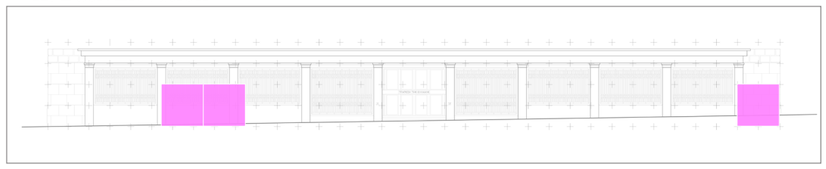
Event

Event Date: 24 | 11 | 2012
Event Nature: Anti-racist Rally.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: I

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013
Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

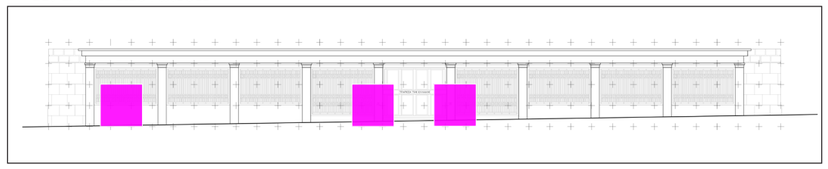
Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013
Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

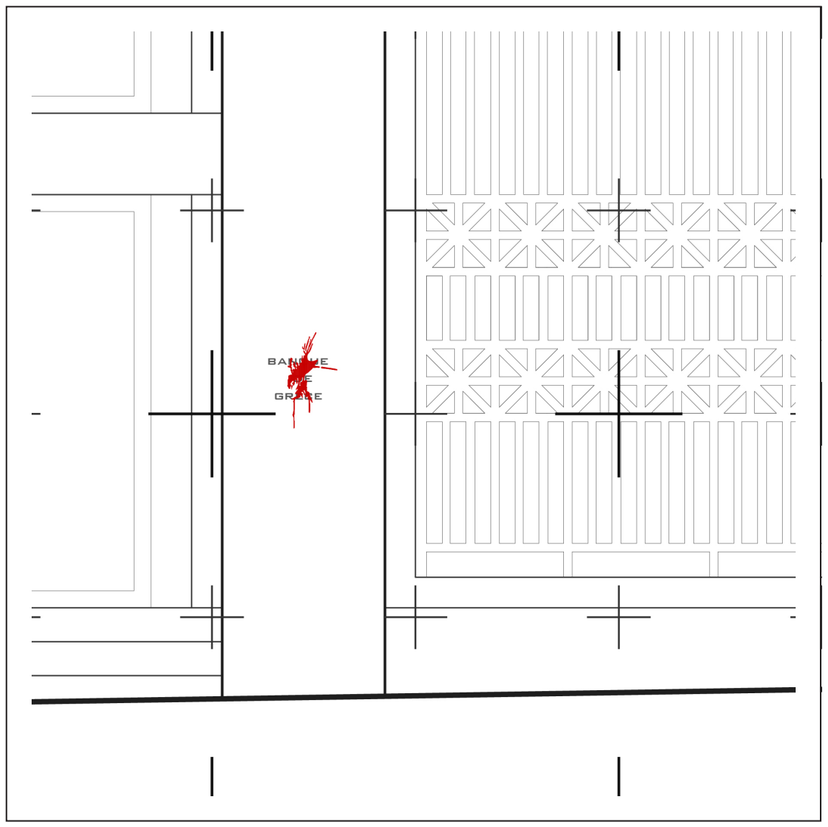
I. Front Elevation



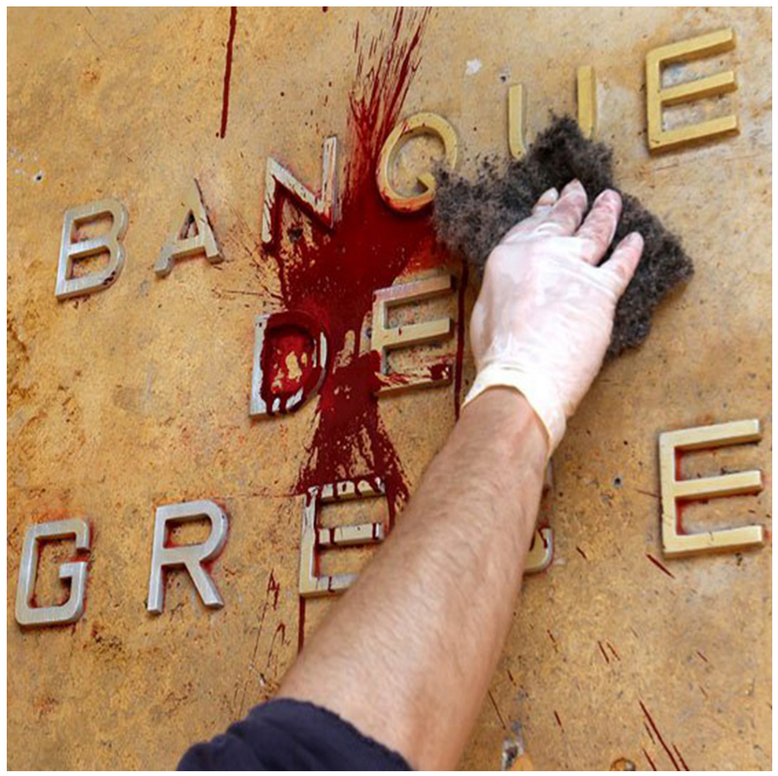
II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #101



Writing Serial No: #072



Text

Reads: ---

Image

Date Taken: 20 | 02 | 2013

Image Caption: A man removes paint from the sign of the Central Bank of Greece following demonstrations in Athens, Greece, on Feb. 20, 2013.

Photographer: Simon Dawson (Bloomberg)

Writing

Tool: Paint Ball

Substance: Red Emulsion Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

Grid Location: II-γ19 – ε21

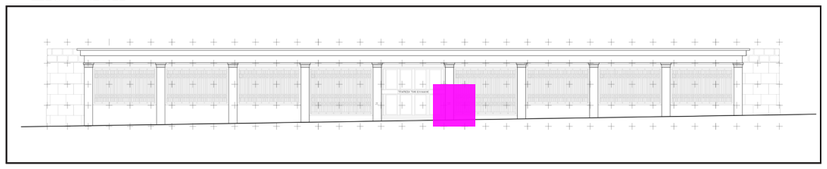
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 20 | 02 | 2013

Post Title: Greeks still to convince EU on bailout commitments.

Elevation



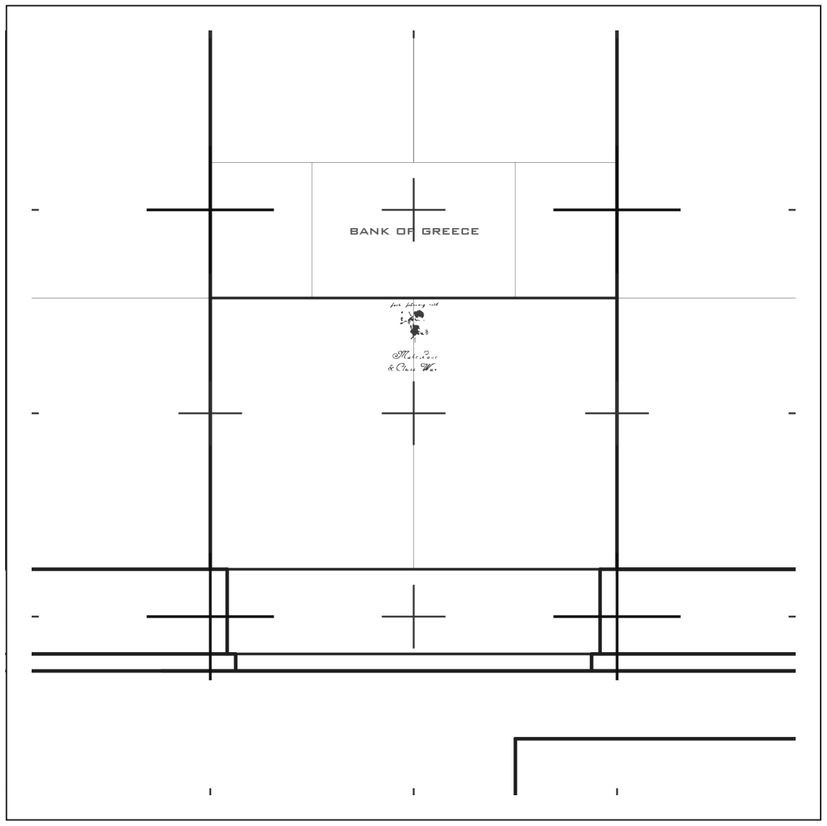
Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

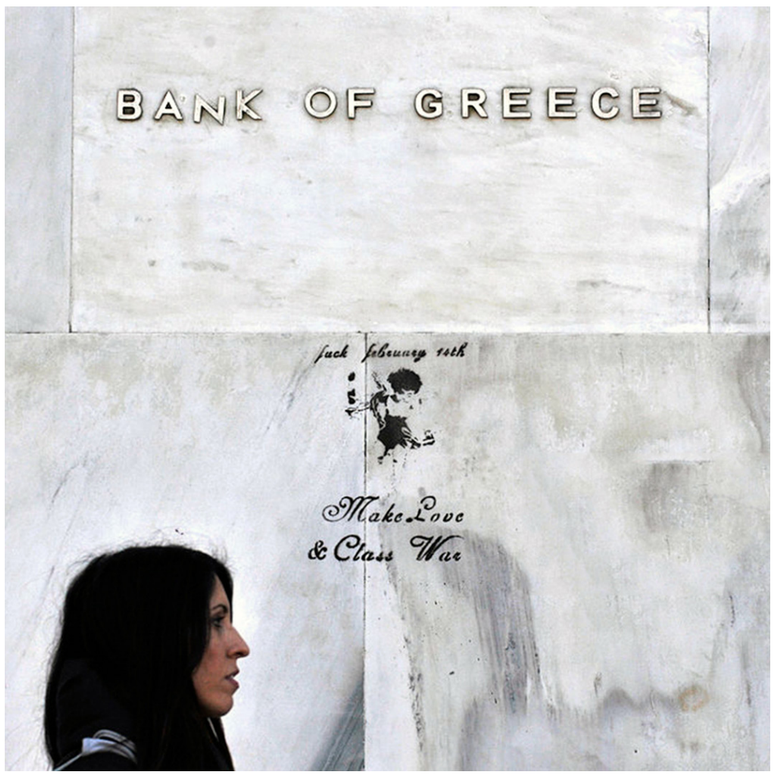
Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hpnoqyr Last Visit: 18 | 09 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #102



Writing Serial No: #073



Text

Reads: Fuck February 14th. Make Love & Class War.

Image

Date Taken: 18 | 02 | 2013

Image Caption: A woman walks on February 18, 2013 by a Bank of Greece branch with the slogan 'Make Love and Class War' written on the wall. Thousands of Greeks joined new anti-austerity protests, causing massive disruption to flights, ferries and hospital services in the debt-ridden country.

Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

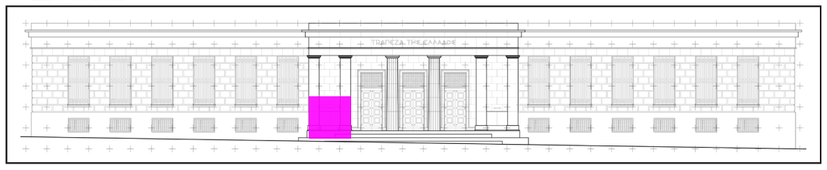
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 19 | 02 | 2013

Post Title: Make love and Class War

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/z9p6otw Last Visit: 31 | 01 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #103



Writing Serial No: #074



Text

Reads: What Is A Robbery Of A Bank Compared To Its Foundation

[ΤΙ ΕΙΝΑΙ Η ΛΗΣΤΕΙΑ ΜΙΑΣ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑΣ ΜΠΡΟΣΤΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΙΔΡΥΣΗ ΤΗΣ;]

Image

Date Taken: 18 | 02 | 2013

Image Caption: Athens, Greece, 18th Feb 2013. A hooded protester writes a graffiti slogan against a bank wall. A general 24 hour strike in Athens, with the participation of private and public sector unions, protested against austerity measures with a march to Syntagma Square.

Photographer: Kostas Pikoulas (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

Grid Location: II-γ03 – ε05

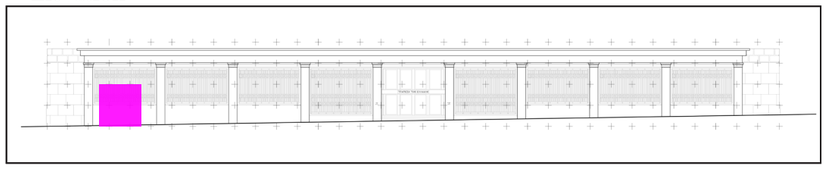
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 18 | 02 | 2013

Post Title: General strike ends with minor clashes in Athens.

Elevation



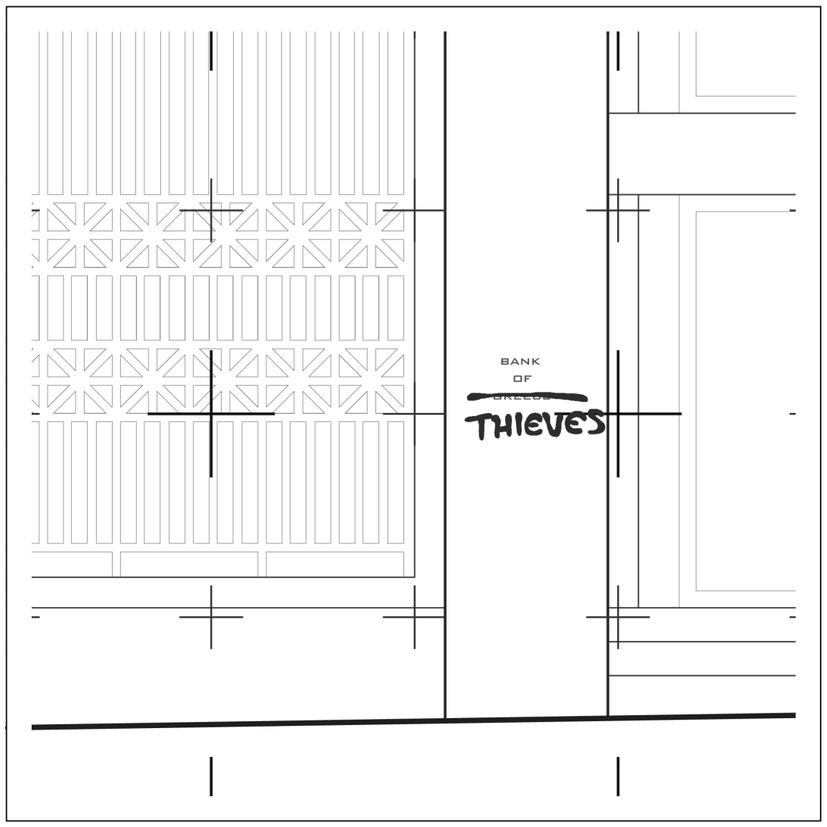
Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gtm45u5 Last Visit: 11 | 02 | 2016

Writing Set/Sequence No: #104



Writing Serial No: #075



Text

Reads: (Bank Of ~~Greece~~) Thieves

Image

Date Taken: 18 | 02 | 2013

Image Caption: Athens, Greece. 18th Feb 2013. Graffiti on the Bank of Greece building on Stadiou Street. The graffiti says Thieves. Poverty, homelessness and closed-down shops compose the despressing landscape of a deepening social and economic crisis in Greece.

Photographer: Savvas Karmaniolas (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

Grid Location: II-γ15 – ε17

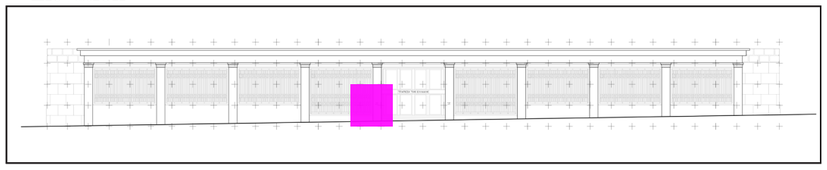
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 18 | 02 | 2013

Post Title: Society struggles as government prepares further austerity measures.

Elevation



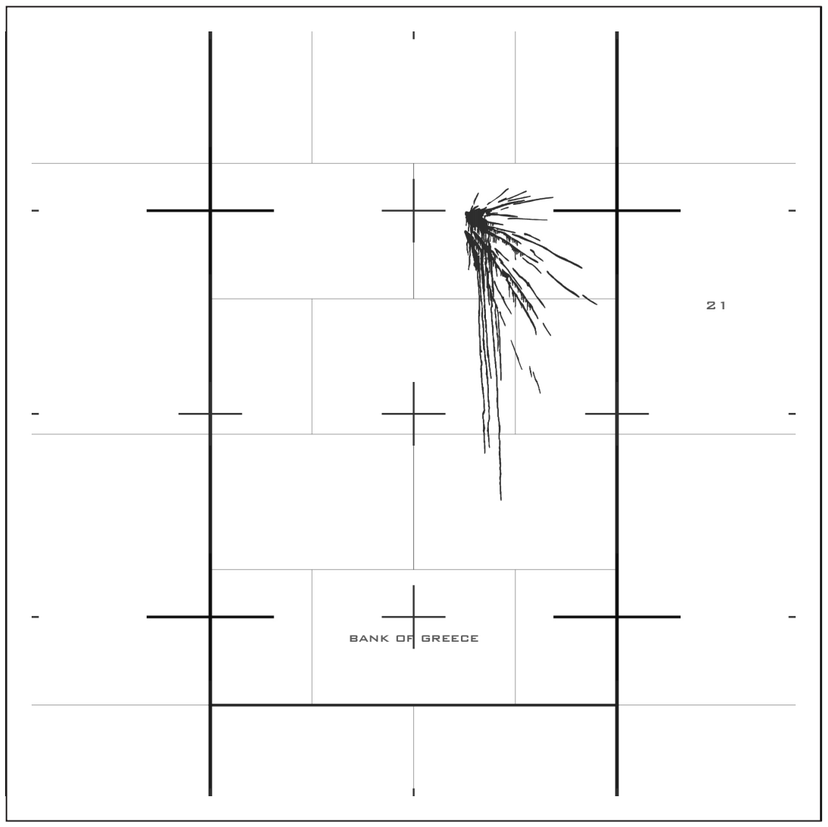
Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/z62fvw7 Last Visit: 14 | 11 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #105



Writing Serial No: #076



Text

Reads: -------

Image

Date Taken: 18 | 02 | 2013

Image Caption: Bank of Greece... with some post-demonstration residue.

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Paint Bucket

Substance: Black Emulsion Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Erasure Date: 20 | 02 | 2013

Grid Location: I-γ17 – ε16

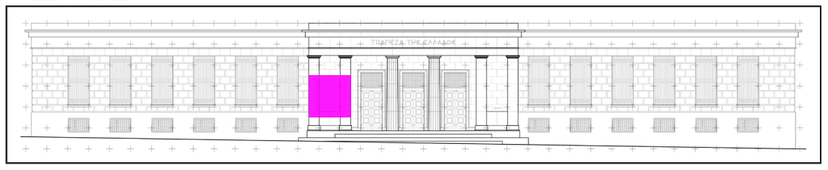
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 17 | 05 | 2013

Post Title: --------

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 18 | 02 | 2013

Event Nature: 24h general strike held in Greece with demonstrations in Athens.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/qgkba3z Last Visit: 09 | 07 | 2014

Writing Set No: K

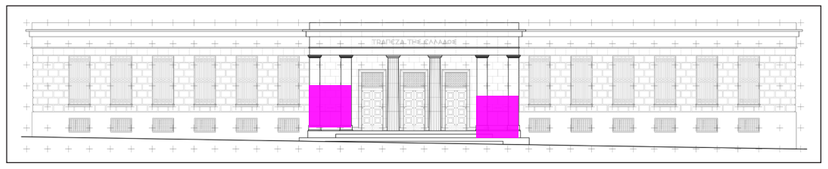
Duration

Writing Date: 11 | 04 | 2014
Erasure Date: 14 | 04 | 2014

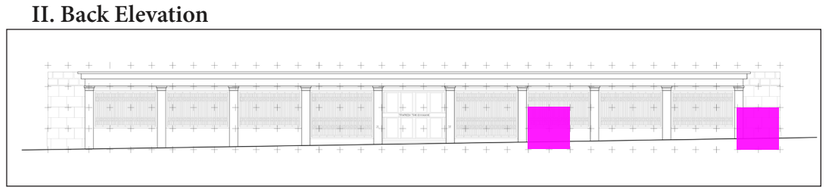
Event

Event Date: 11 | 04 | 2014
Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with protests.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: L

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015
Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

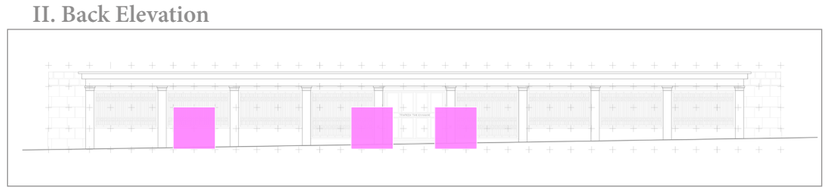
Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015
Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

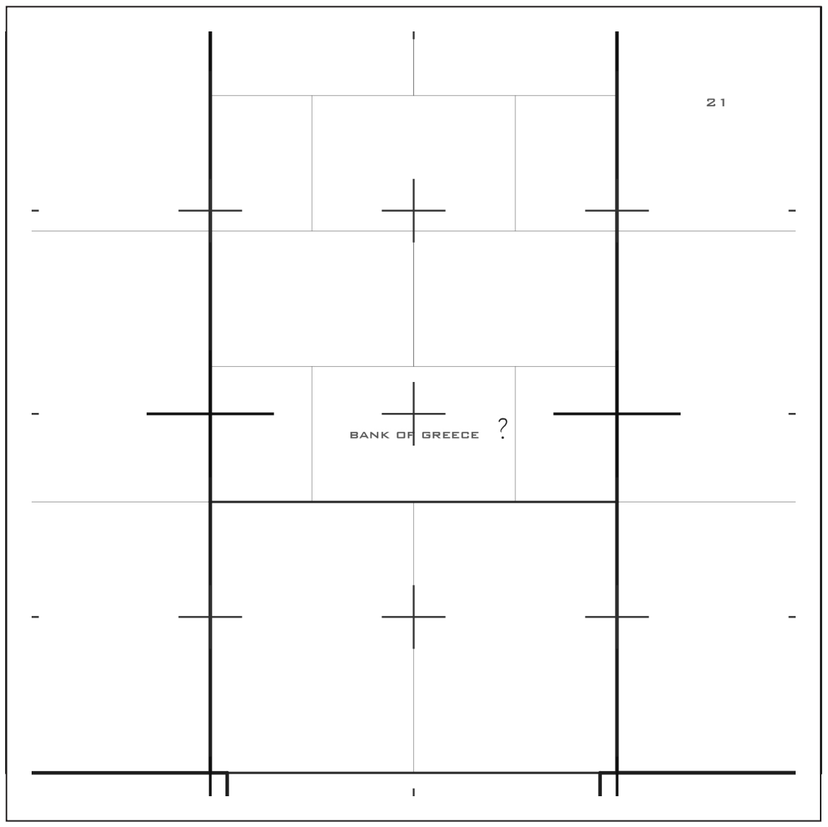
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #K01



Writing Serial No: #077



Text

Reads: (Bank Of Greece)?

Image

Date Taken: 11 | 04 | 2014

Image Caption: Pedestrians pass the headquarters of Greece's central bank, whose logo has been defaced, in Athens, Greece, on Friday, Apr 11, 2014.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Erasure Date: 14 | 04 | 2014

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

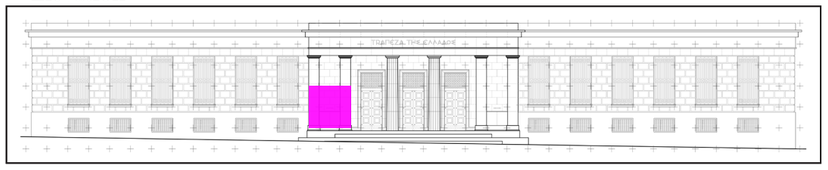
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 11 | 04 | 2014

Post Title: Athens City As Greek Default Hangs In The Balance.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hohba6q Last Visit: 28 | 10 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #K02



Writing Serial No: #078



Text

Reads: Old Man, Where Are You Going With The Horse? A Curfew Is In Place *

[ΓΕΡΟ ΠΟΥ ΠΑΣ ΜΕ Τ' ΑΛΟΓΟ; ΕΧΕΙ ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΣΗ ΚΥΚΛΟΦΟΡΙΑΣ *]

Image

Date Taken: 11 | 04 | 2014

Image Caption: See the slogan, inspired by the statue of Kolokotronis, that caught the attention of passers.

Photographer: --------

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Erasure Date: 14 | 04 | 2014

Grid Location: II-γ34 - ε36

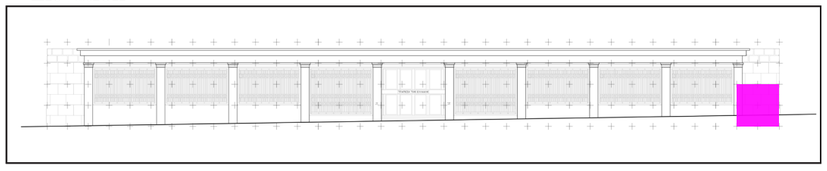
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article

Date Posted: 11 | 04 | 2014

Post Title: "Old man, where are you going?".

Elevation



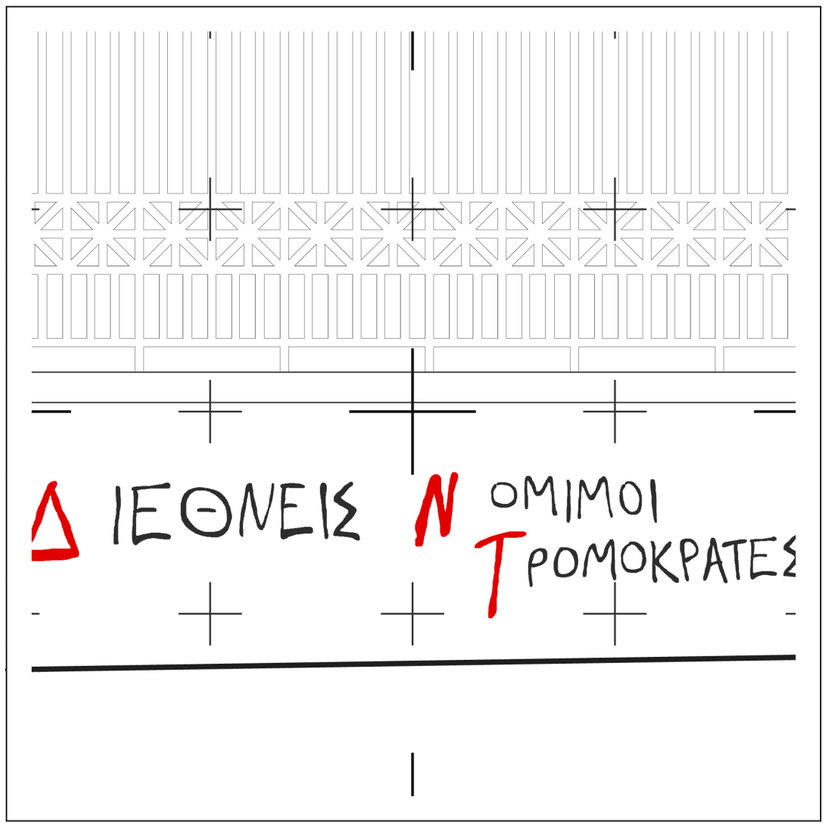
Event

Event Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/zuus9sx Last Visit: 15 | 11 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #K03



Writing Serial No: #079



Text

Reads: (IMF) INTERNATIONAL LEGAL TERRORISTS

[(ΔΝΤ) ΔΙΕΘΝΕΙΣ ΝΟΜΙΜΟΙ ΤΡΟΜΟΚΡΑΤΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 11 | 04 | 2014

Image Caption: A man walks past a 'Bank of Greece' as a graffiti reads on the wall 'IMF, 'International Legal Terrorists' in Athens on April 11, 2014.

Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red/Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Erasure Date: 14 | 04 | 2014

Grid Location: II-γ24 – ε26

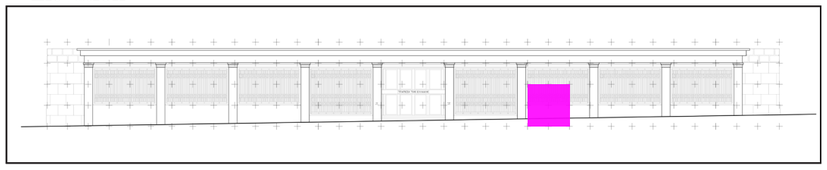
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 11 | 04 | 2014

Post Title: The IMF says Greece "has made progress".

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gorvdww Last Visit: 29 | 05 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #K04



Writing Serial No: #080



Text

Reads: Cops Murderers

[ΜΠΑΤΣΟΙ ΦΟΝΙΑΔΕΣ]

Image

Date Taken: 11 | 04 | 2014

Image Caption: --------

Photographer: Virgilios Tsioullis

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Erasure Date: 14 | 04 | 2014

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

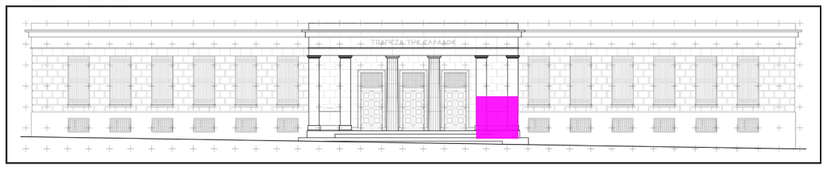
Report

Provenance: ☐ Professional ☒ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 11 | 04 | 2014

Post Title: --------

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 11 | 04 | 2014

Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with protests.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hty32m5 Last Visit: 03 | 06 | 2015

Writing Set No: K

Duration

Writing Date: 11 | 04 | 2014
Erasure Date: 14 | 04 | 2014

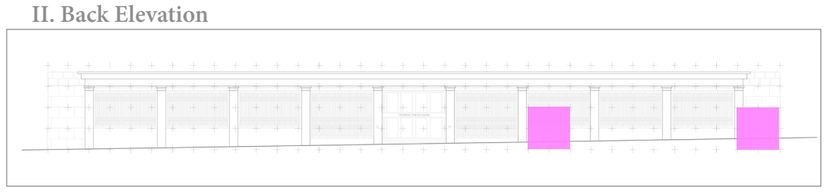
Event

Event Date: 11 | 04 | 2014
Event Nature: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is welcomed with protests.

I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set No: L

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015
Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

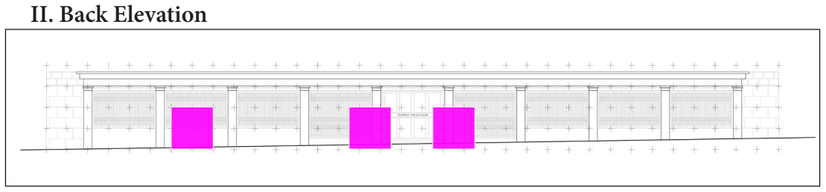
Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015
Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

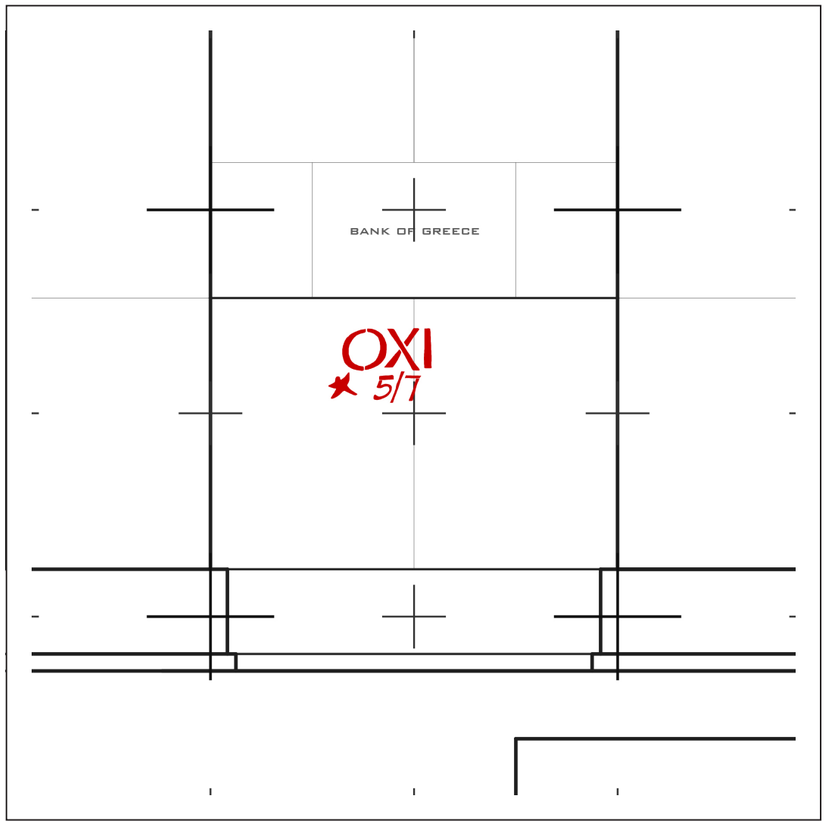
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #101



Writing Serial No: #081



Text

Reads: NO * 5/7

[OXI * 5/7]

Image

Date Taken: 03 | 07 | 2015

Image Caption: Oxi (No in Greek) stickers and graffiti surround the sign of the Bank of Greece as electioneering on the referendum continues on July 3, 2015 in Athens, Greece. The 'Yes' and 'No' supporters in Greece are set to hold major rallies in Athens today ahead of Sunday's referendum.

Photographer: Christopher Furlong (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 03 | 07 | 2015

Post Title: Greek PM Urges A No Vote In Sunday's Referendum As Greek Economic Crisis Deepens.

Elevation



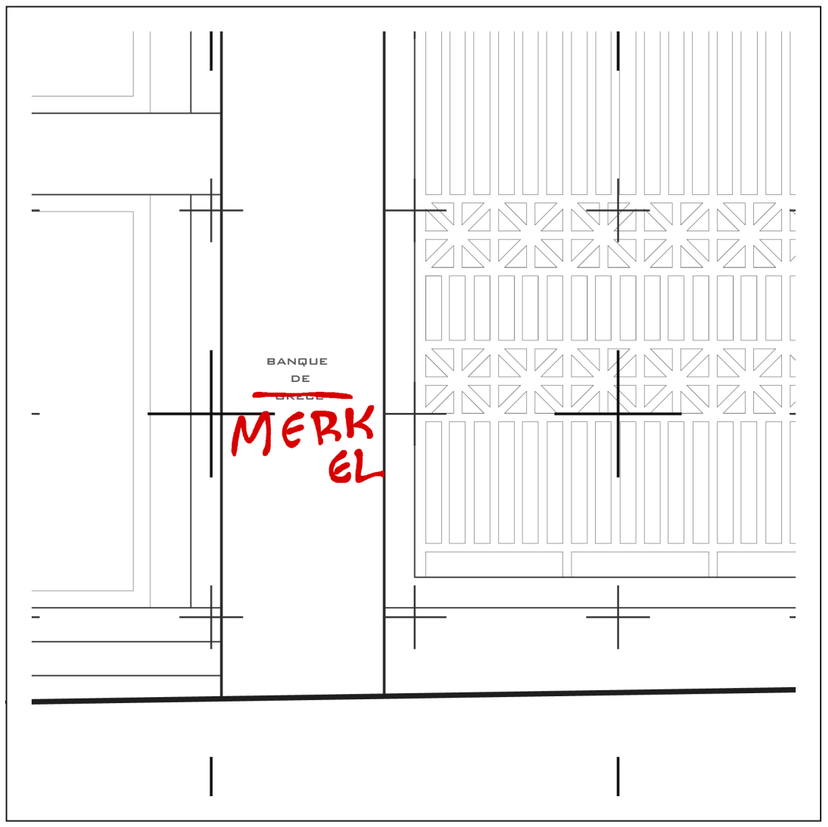
Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jewnvyn Last Visit: 05 | 07 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #L02



Writing Serial No: #082



Text

Reads: (Banque De ~~Grece~~) Merkel

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 07 | 2015

Image Caption: A picture taken on July 7, 2015 shows the sign outside the Bank of Greece defaced with a graffito to read 'Bank of Merkel', in Athens. Eurozone leaders will hold an emergency summit in Brussels on July 7 to discuss the fallout from Greek voters' defiant 'No' to further austerity measures.

Photographer: Angelos Tzortzinis (AFP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Red Acrylic Paint

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

Grid Location: II-γ19 – ε21

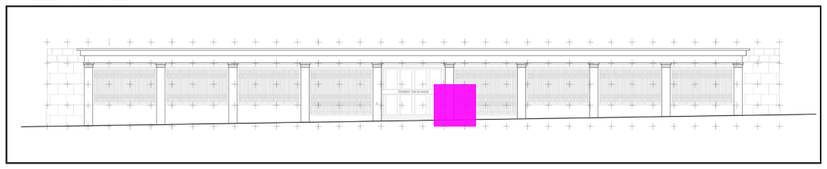
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 07 | 07 | 2015

Post Title: Life in the new Greece.

Elevation



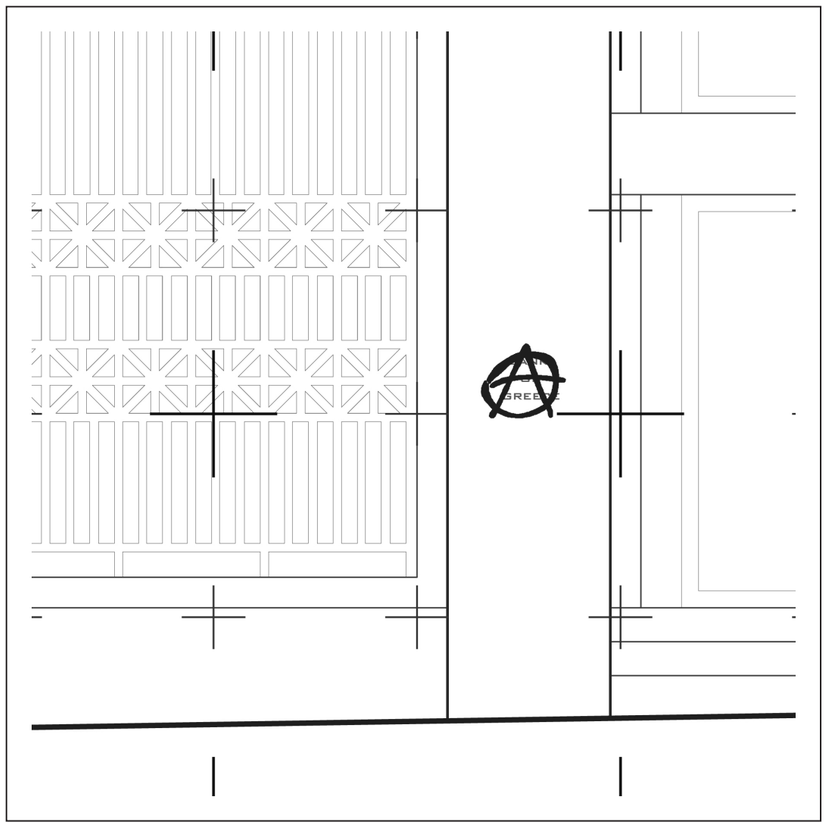
Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/j9de3qr Last Visit: 07 | 07 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #L03



Writing Serial No: #083



Text

Reads: 'Encircled 'A'
[Standing For 'Anarchy']

Image

Date Taken: 06 | 07 | 2015
Image Caption: An anarchy symbol is spray-painted over the logo of Bank of Greece in Athens.
Photographer: Alkis Konstantinidis (AP)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Black Acrylic Paint
Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015
Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

Grid Location: II-γ15 – ε17

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Article
Date Posted: 07 | 07 | 2015
Post Title: Greeks rush to withdraw cash as government admits it can't make IMF payment.

Elevation

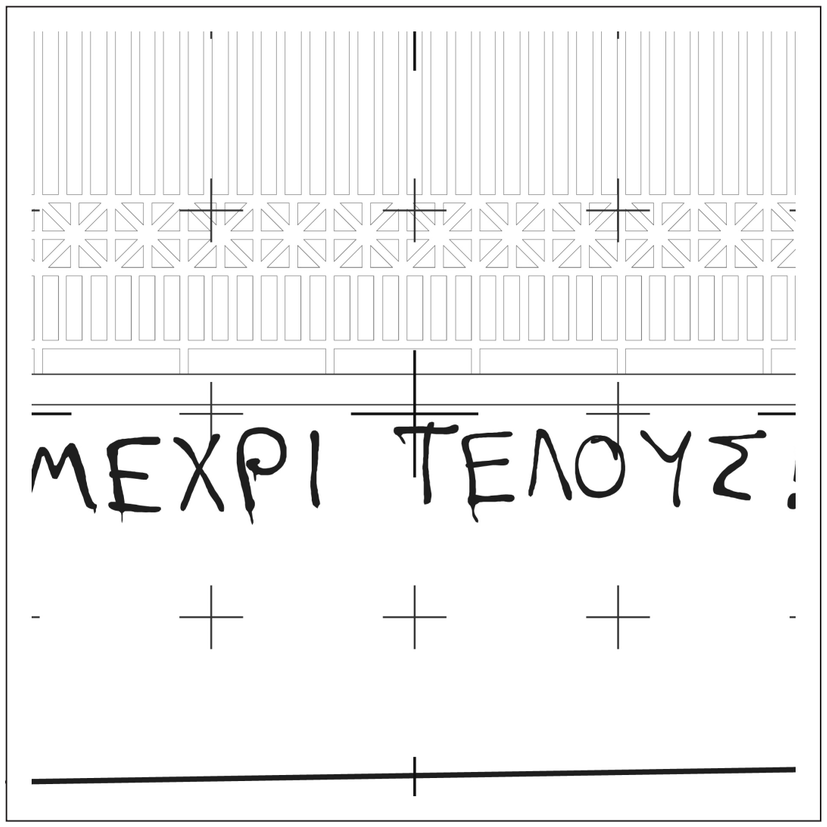


Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015
Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jou4wek Last Visit: 09 | 07 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #L04



Writing Serial No: #084



Text

Reads: Till The End!

[ΜΕΧΡΙ ΤΕΛΟΥΣ!]

Image

Date Taken: 07 | 07 | 2015

Image Caption: A man cleans off the latest batch of anti-austerity graffiti from the walls of the Bank of Greece on July 7, 2015 in Athens, Greece. Greek PM A Tsipras is meeting members of his party to discuss the eurozone bailout deal before a meeting in parliament to begin implementing bailout reforms.

Photographer: Christopher Furlong (Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

Grid Location: II-γ07 - ε09

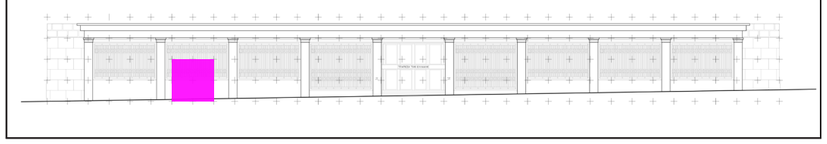
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 07 | 07 | 2015

Post Title: Eurozone Leaders Reach Agreement After Talks Over A Third Bail-out For Greece.

Elevation



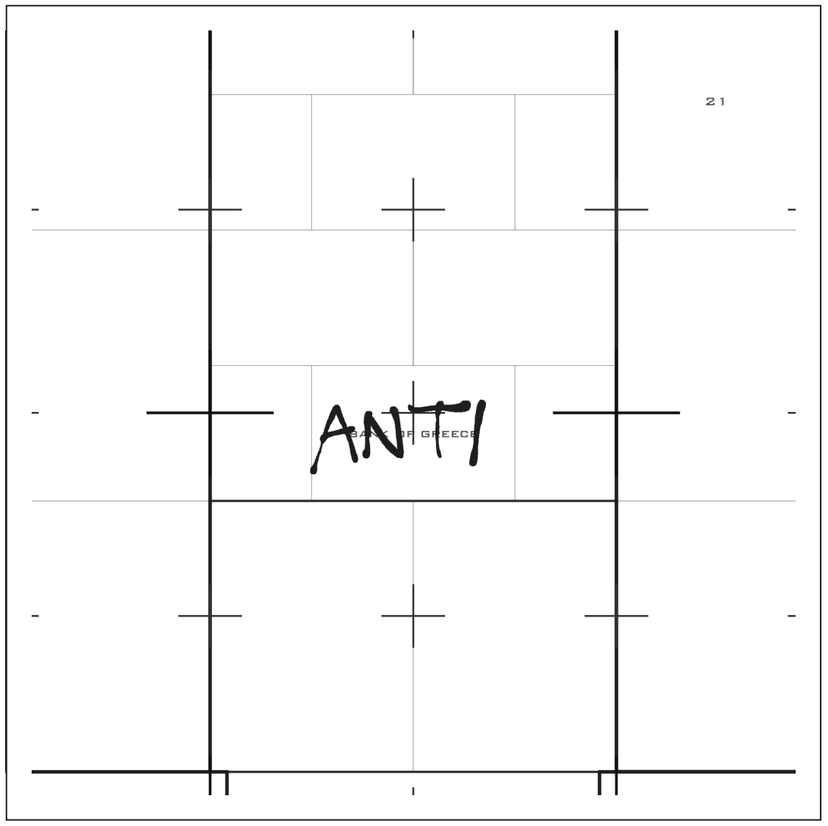
Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/htxuyao Last Visit: 09 | 07 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #105



Writing Serial No: #085



Text

Reads: ~~Anti (Bank of Greece)~~

Image

Date Taken: 03 | 07 | 2015

Image Caption: A protestor spray paints a graffiti slogan reading 'Anti' on the marble wall outside the headquarters of the Greek central bank during referendum protests in Athens, Greece, on Friday, July 3, 2015.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

Grid Location: I-δ14 – ζ16

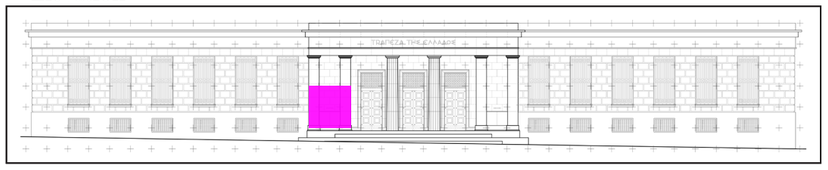
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 03 | 07 | 2015

Post Title: Greece Seeks 'No' Financial Aid Deal.

Elevation



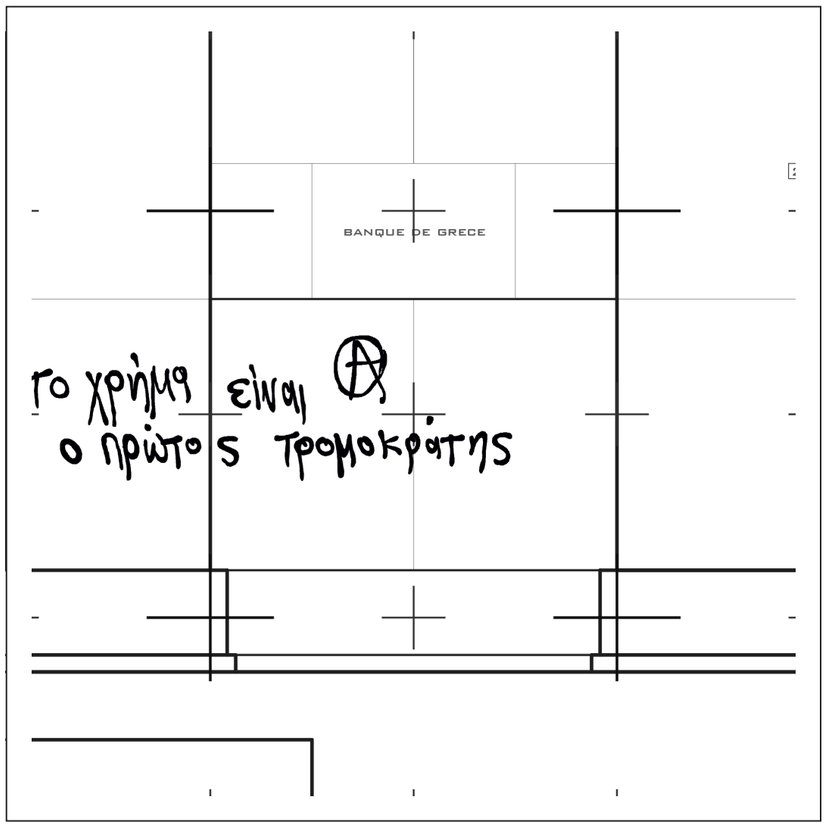
Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/htxuyao Last Visit: 10 | 07 | 2015

Writing Set/Sequence No: #L06



Writing Serial No: #086



Text

Reads: Money is the first terrorist 'A'

[ΤΟ ΧΡΗΜΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ Ο ΠΡΩΤΟΣ ΤΡΟΜΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 03 | 07 | 2015

Image Caption: A pedestrian passes graffiti reading 'Money is the first terrorist' on a wall outside the headquarters of the Bank of Greece SA in Athens, Greece, on Friday, July 3, 2015.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Erasure Date: 07 | 07 | 2015

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

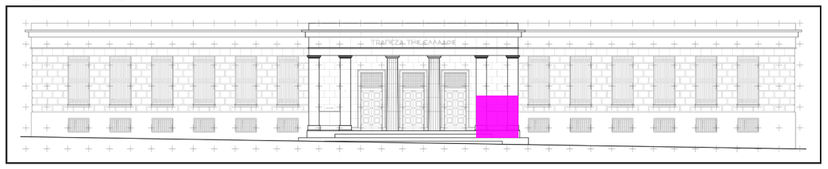
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 03 | 07 | 2015

Post Title: Greek Economy Ahead Of 450 Million Euro Payment Deadline.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 03 | 07 | 2015

Event Nature: Greek Bailout Referendum demonstrations.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/htxuyao Last Visit: 10 | 07 | 2015

Writing Set No: M

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 11 | 2015
Erasure Date: 13 | 11 | 2015

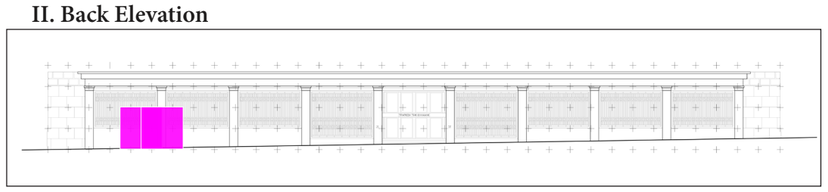
Event

Event Date: 12 | 11 | 2015
Event Nature: 24h General Strike.

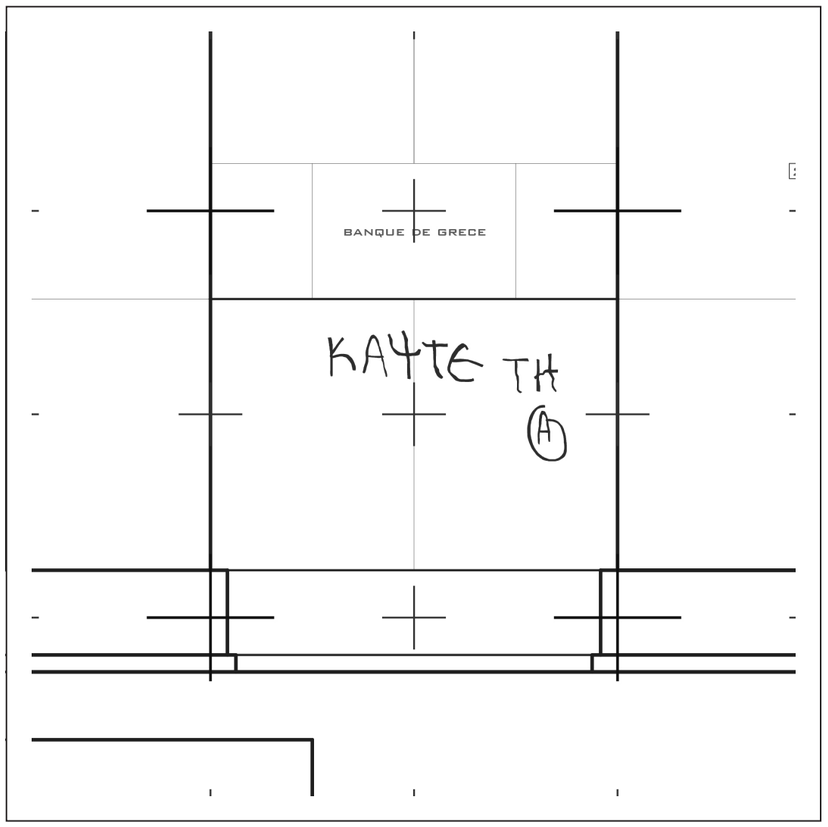
I. Front Elevation



II. Back Elevation



Writing Set/Sequence No: #M01



Writing Serial No: #087



Text

Reads: Burn it 'A'

[ΚΑΨΤΕ ΤΗ 'Α']

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 11 | 2015

Image Caption: A protestor writes graffiti on the wall of Greece's central bank as the entrance doors burn during a 24 hour general strike in Athens, Greece, on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015.

Photographer: Kostas Tsironis (Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Black Permanent Ink

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 11 | 2015

Erasure Date: 13 | 11 | 2015

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

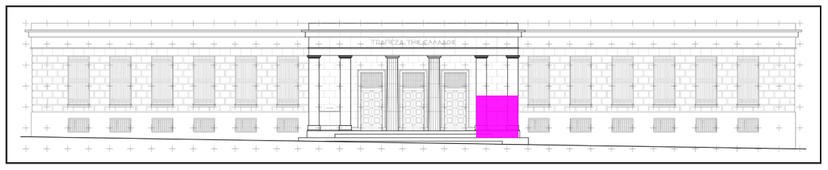
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 12 | 11 | 2015

Post Title: Greek General Strike As Unions Bring the Country to a Standstill for 24 Hours.

Elevation



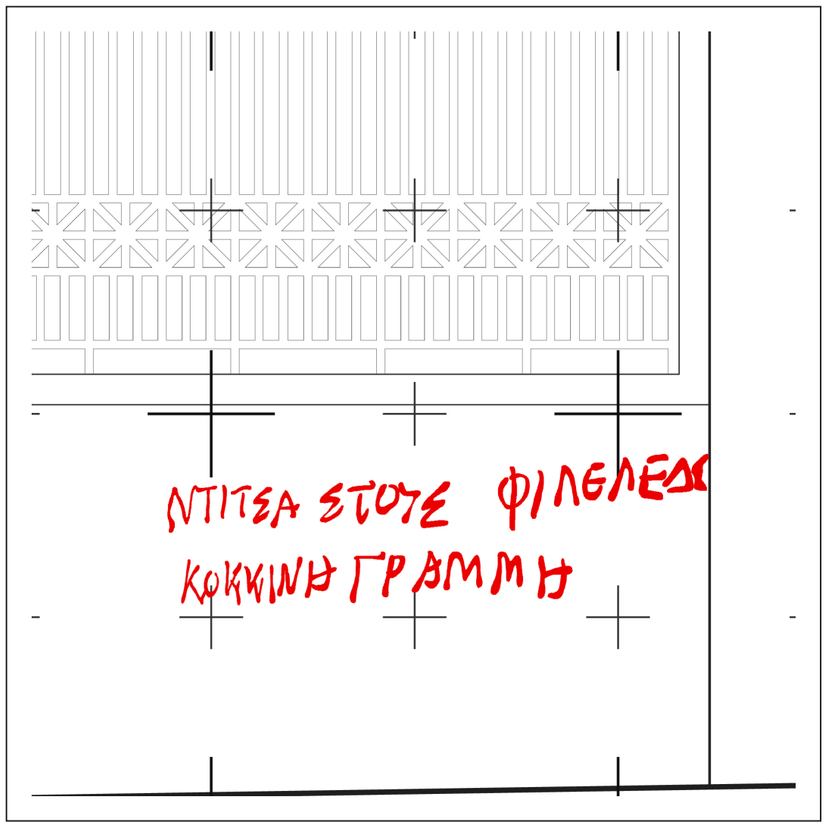
Event

Event Date: 12 | 11 | 2015

Event Nature: 24h General Strike.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/gtfsp9l Last Visit: 12 | 03 | 2016

Writing Set/Sequence No: #M02



Writing Serial No: #088



Text

Reads: Dick To Neoliberals
Red Line
[ΝΤΙΤΣΑ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΕΔΕΣ
ΚΟΚΚΙΝΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΗ]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 11 | 2015
Image Caption: A graffiti on a wall reads 'Tsipras you are a traitor'. Small clashes and rioting followed the demonstration in Athens as part of the 24hour general strike.
Photographer: George Panagakis (Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan
Substance: Red Acrylic Paint
Surface: Grey Marble

Duration

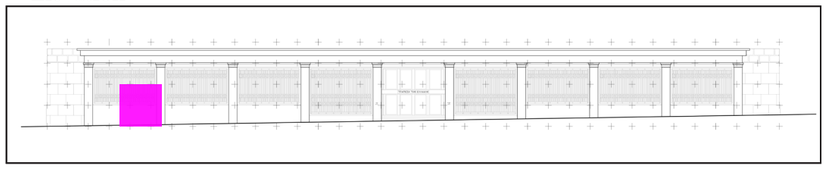
Writing Date: 12 | 11 | 2015
Erasure Date: 13 | 11 | 2015

Grid Location: II-γ04 – ε06

Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage
Date Posted: 12 | 11 | 2015
Post Title: Greek General Strike As Unions Bring the Country to a Standstill for 24 Hours.

Elevation

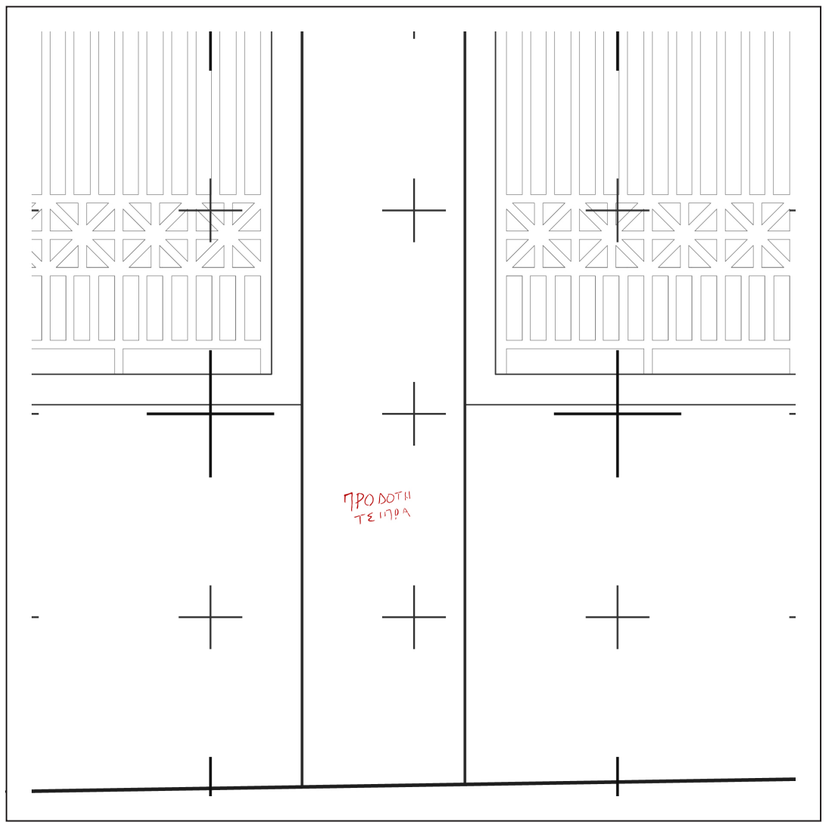


Event

Event Date: 12 | 11 | 2015
Event Nature: 24h General Strike.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hne8bu8 Last Visit: 19 | 08 | 2016

Writing Set/Sequence No: #M03



Writing Serial No: #089



Text

Reads: Tsipras you are a traitor

[ΤΣΙΠΡΑ ΠΡΟΔΟΤΗ]

Image

Date Taken: 12 | 11 | 2015

Image Caption: A graffiti on a wall reads 'Tsipras you are a traitor'. Small clashes and rioting followed the demonstration in Athens as part of the 24hour general strike.

Photographer: George Panagakis (Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Marker Pen

Substance: Red Permanent Ink

Surface: Brown Stone

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 11 | 2015

Erasure Date: 13 | 11 | 2015

Grid Location: II-γ05 – ε07

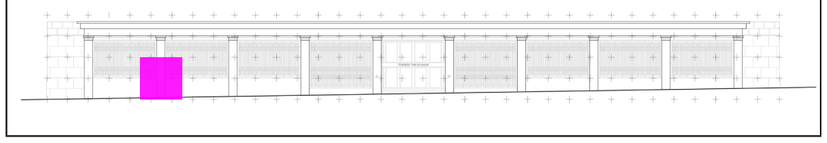
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 12 | 11 | 2015

Post Title: Greek General Strike As Unions Bring the Country to a Standstill for 24 Hours.

Elevation



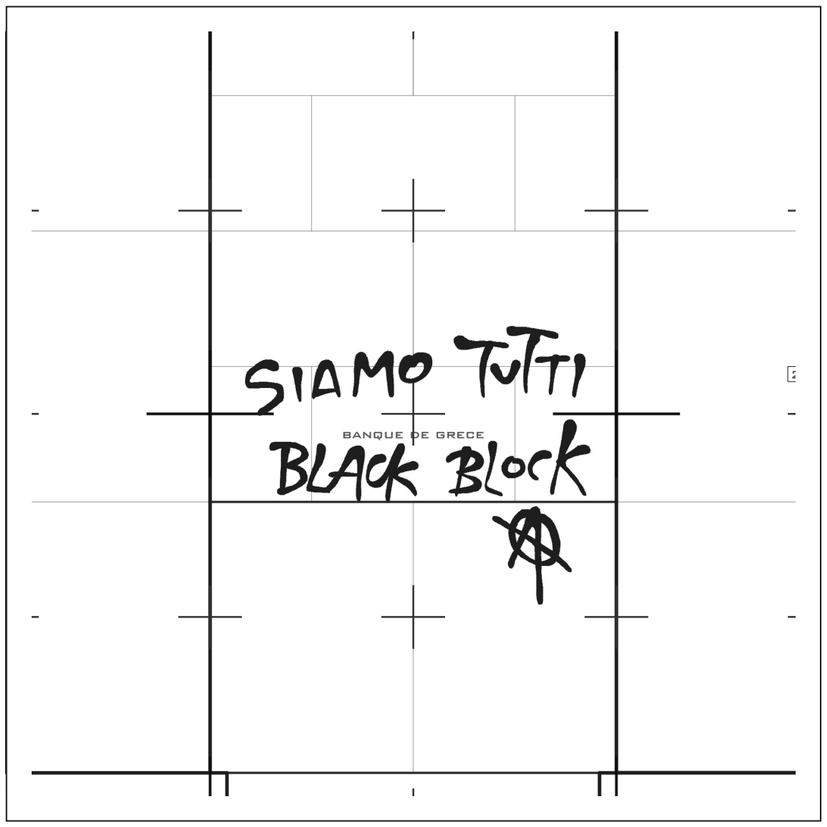
Event

Event Date: 12 | 11 | 2015

Event Nature: 24h General Strike.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/hne8bu8 Last Visit: 19 | 08 | 2016

Writing Set/Sequence No: #M04



Writing Serial No: #090



Text

Reads: We All Are Black Block 'A'

[SIAMO TUTTI BLACK BLOCK 'A']

Image

Date Taken: 13 | 11 | 2015

Image Caption: People walk past Bank of Greece headquarters in central Athens on November 13, 2015.

Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki (AFP/Getty Images)

Writing

Tool: Aerosol Spraycan

Substance: Black Acrylic Paint

Surface: White Marble

Duration

Writing Date: 12 | 11 | 2015

Erasure Date: 13 | 11 | 2015

Grid Location: I-δ22 – ζ24

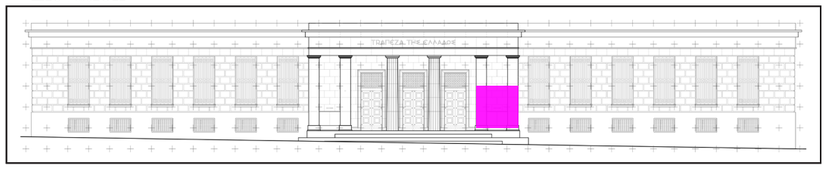
Report

Provenance: ☒ Professional ☐ Amateur Photoreportage

Date Posted: 13 | 11 | 2015

Post Title: Greek General Strike As Unions Bring the Country to a Standstill for 24 Hours.

Elevation



Event

Event Date: 12 | 11 | 2015

Event Nature: 24h General Strike.

Image Source: https://tinyurl.com/jjhro6v Last Visit: 12 | 03 | 2016

3.2.7. 'Bank of ~~Greece~~': A Report of a Context-dependant Image War

Neither the image nor the location of the BoG building is accidental. They are deliberate and designate the meaning of the writings that occupy it. Yet, neither are the urban writings accidental: urban writers know how politically charged the street is, what neoclassical architecture and marble mean for the Greek society, and the special role the specific institution plays in the current financial crisis. In other words, they recognise these visual and cultural characteristics of the building and its landscape, and transform them into a canvas of political clash. A close examination of these marks shows that their meaning is anchored in their distinctive physical position on the surface and the unique historical moment of their execution. Graffiti are place and time specific because their meaning is indissolubly linked to their 'contextual position'.

The writings on the BoG are topo-sensitive signs as their "spatial or temporal co-ordinates" are "formators" of their meaning, to remember Eco's definition.[303] As such, the social and political circumstances as well as the contexts of the particular events during which these writings are produced deserve attention. To examine how graffiti's spatial and temporal co-ordinates (in)form their meanings, one needs to pay attention to their particular positioning and sequences. In other words, in order to make sense of the writings we need to focus on the ways they are spatially and temporally serialised. To do so, the drawings provide a timeline recording the major social and political events and a map-elevation upon which each graffito is positioned. The drawings together with the record cards allow us to navigate in the BoG graffiti.

This graffiti record focuses solely on the writings that made their appearance on the two main façades of the BoG building (at Panepistimiou and Stadiou Avenue)[304] and spans from May 2010 to November 2015. The collected graffiti material – which comes exclusively from online sources – is ordered and sequenced in 13 'sets', which are groups of writings before their removal. Each mark is indexed with a letter-number prefix: the letter refers to the writing set while the number to the mark's display order within the particular set (e.g., #D05 is the fifth writing of the forth set). The findings are registered in record cards which list information about the mark, the event during which the writing was produced and the photograph through which the mark was identified.[305]

The writings on the BoG are blatantly place-sensitive as their content is mainly related to banks as physical entities, the institution of banking, or those who serve the banking system (e.g., #E02: Death to Bankers; #F04: Burn the Banks) [199]. The inscriptions repeatedly question the ownership of the BoG and the authorship of its decisions in the current state of crisis (e.g., #F02 and #H01: 'Bank of Berlin'; #G02 and #L02: 'Bank of Merkel'). Another instance that highlights this 'topo-responsive' nature is the writing #B02 which reads 'There Is Money', reiterating the ambiguous statement of George Papandreou, the PM candidate at that time.[306] Yet, this statement acquires a completely different meaning when it is placed on this particular surface as it is inviting the graffiti reader to take the money from the bank, in a way similar to the slogan #F05 which is stating 'Rob to have Money' [200].

The non-linguistic signs or the ones without phonetic equivalent acquire their meaning exclusively from their placement on the surface (e.g., question marks, simple lines, arrows, splashes, etc.). These marks are not read as texts but rather as images. Their signification stems from their positioning on the material substrate and the way they look like rather than from what

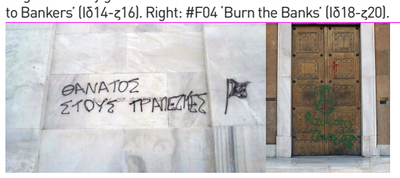
303 Eco, U. (1979). *Theory of Semiotics.* Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press. p. 186.

304 I restricted my project to these two because the vast majority of the images that I managed to gather depicted writings located there. This delimitation enabled me to set up the spatial boundaries of the study and facilitated the recording procedure.

305 The record cards are inspired from the *Excavating Home* project, designed by Ersi Ioannidou. Yet, the latter has a distinctly different purpose - it is an attempt to question the relationship between personal possessions in the construction of the feeling 'at home'. For more details see Ioannidou, E. (2009). The Minimum Home. In T. Meade, L. Diaz & I. Creed (Eds.), *Occupation: Negotiations with Constructed Space.* Brighton: University of Brighton.

Banks and banking system are the literal and metaphorical targets of many graffiti in the Athens of crisis. Left: #E02 'Death to Bankers' (Ιδ14-ζ16). Right: #F04 'Burn the Banks' (Ιδ18-ζ20).

199
K09



306 Greeks reacted harshly when PM candidate George Papandreou – during an electoral speech in February 2008 – stated that "there is money" and a few months later revealed that the state reserves were considerably lower and the debt unexpectedly higher than previously thought.

200
K09



When money becomes the issue, then the most probable target is a bank. The meaning of slogans depends on their contexts. Left: #B02 'There is money' (Ι-δ18-ζ20). Right: #F05 'Rob to have money' (Ι-δ14-ζ16).



Questioning the authority of the bank. Specific marks owe their meanings to their placement on the surface. Left: #K01 '[Bank of Greece]?' (I-δ14-ζ16). Right: #B03 'Whores-> [Banque De Grece]?' (I-δ22-ζ24).

201
K09



The symbolic meaning of particular graffiti gestures. Here #C03-#C05 consist of red paint symbolising the blood of Alexandros Grigoropoulos (I-γ14-ε16).

202
K09

This demonstration turned violent and was stigmatised by the death of three bank employees inside a branch at Stadiou Street. 5.5.2010 is a milestone date because it is considered as the very first day that the (economic) crisis makes itself visible in Greece.

307

Commemorative graffiti on 6.12.2010. Top: #C01 'Alex e vivo' (Iδ22-ζ24). Bottom: #C02 reproduces the iconic slogan 'Merry crisis and a happy new fear' (I-ε27-n31).



203
K09

Graffiti often reflect the topicality of their production. The #L01 (I-δ14-ζ16) stencil invites passers-by to vote 'No' to the referendum on 5.7.2015.



204
K09



The meaning of certain writings derives from their spatio-temporal position. Left: #K02 'Old man, where are you going with the horse? A curfew is in place' on 11.04.2014 (II-γ34-ε36). Right: #F14 'Reserve MAT and haircut DIAS' on 12.2.2012 (I-ε08-n12).

205
K09

they actually say. These signs, in particular, highlight the hieroglyphic character of the graffiti in this situation. For example, #K01 is a single question mark. It owes its meaning to its position at the end of the 'Bank of Greece' epigraph, while questioning the institution which supports this surface. The #B03 writing – which reads 'Whores' and is accompanied by an arrow pointing to the 'Banque de Grèce' epigraph – gets its full meaning from the pointer **[201]**. The merely gestural marks – i.e. those without particular content (e.g., #D01-#D05: paint splashes) – or the actions whose intention is to deface (e.g., removing 'NK' letters from the epigraph) have also their own particular meanings. In order to decipher them, however, one has to appreciate their visual attributes or rely on his/her knowledge of their latent – usually culturally and contextually specific – characteristics (e.g., the red paint splashes refers to Alexis Grigoropoulos' blood) **[202]**. Since these marks are content-free, they are more concerned with drawing attention to the action per se and change the way the attacked surface looks like; they are iconoclastic gestures par excellence.

Several writings on the BoG reflect the time of their production as they refer to a specific topicality. Example given, in the beginning of the crisis, graffiti target the IMF as it is seen as one of the BoG's closest collaborators (e.g., #A02: 'IMF Out'). Characteristic of this trend is the set A, the writings of which are produced on 5th of May 2010 during a massive and riotous protest, just five days after PM G. Papandreou announces that called for EU/IMF rescue package.[307] Another illustrative example is the #I04 writing 'Solidarity to Immigrants' which occurrs during an anti-racist demonstration on 24.11.2012. Further, all the writings of set C that made their appearance on the 6.12.2010 – during the second anniversary in the memory of Alexandros Grigoropoulos – are concerned with this event and are of commemorative nature (e.g., #C01: 'Alex É Vivo') **[203]**. For example, the writing #C02 – reading 'Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear' – reproduces the emblematic slogan during the December events. At the same time, points to other similar writings around the city that perpetuate and monumentalise the slogan and fetishise the crisis.

It seems that the appearance, location and/or function of some buildings dictate how they will be defaced. In the contemporary state of crisis, the BoG headquarters building is perhaps a paradigmatic case of this tendency: its walls record the political turbulences and social unrests whenever they happen. For instance, sets E and F – the marks of which are produced on 4 and 12 February 2012 respectively – concentrate the largest numbers of writings. At the same time, the associated riotous mass rallies against the planned second bailout result to extensive damages to the urban fabric. In other words, there is a direct correspondence between the intensification of political processes and iconoclastic acts turned against the BoG. Another case that illustrates how inscriptions reflect their temporality is #L01 – a stencil reading 'NO 5/7' – that was produced and disseminated during the Greek bailout referendum demonstrations in July 2015 **[204]**.

Spatio-temporal placement, however, is not enough to fully appreciate the meaning of BoG's graffiti. The writing #K02 – which was discussed in the beginning of this chapter – is exemplar in this regard. One might be able to read the slogans but won't comprehend their meanings if is not aware of the conditions that engendered them. One has to study each writing in its 'contextual position', i.e. in relation to its place, time and surrounding discourse. For example, #F14 reads 'Reserve M.A.T. [Units for the Reinstatement of Order] And Haircut Di.As. [Teams of Motorcycling Policing]' mocking the words 'reserve' and 'haircut' which refer to the planned reserve of public servants and the haircut of the Greek debt **[205]**.

The spatial and temporal placement of #G02 is exemplar (I-δ22-ζ24). The strikethrough in this particular place transforms the 'Banque De Grece' epigraph into 'Banque de Merkel'. The date chosen, i.e. 26.09.2012, is few days before Chancellor Angela Merkel visits Athens.



206
K09



#G02, similarly to every other graffito, makes different sense when examined together with the rest writings with which it temporarily coexisted. Left: #G01 'The thieves are here' (I-δ14-ζ16). Right: #G04 'Banque de ~~Grece~~' Berlin (II-γ19-ε21).

207
K09



#G02 interacts with #G03 reading 'Their riches, our blood' (I-δ22-ζ24), further complicating our reading.

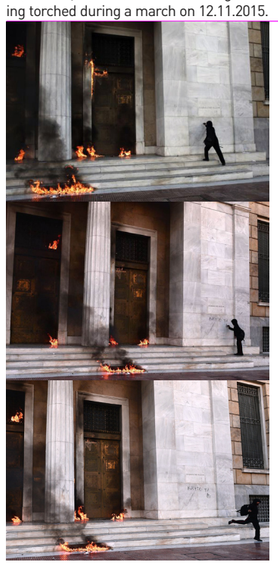
208
K09



The photographic frame depicting the riot policeman, infuses more ambiguity and complexity to the graffiti and its understanding.

209
K09

Some graffiti reflect the exact moment of their production. Below a series of images capture the graffitist of #M01 writing 'Burn it' (I-δ22 - ζ24) while the BoG building is being torched during a march on 12.11.2015.



210
K09

308

As the record cards suggest, I managed to collect 90 individual writings from the BoG over a five year period. This number does not include the graffiti that I probably missed and never made it into my record.

Another emphatic example is #G02. In terms of spatial placement, the cross mark over the BoG epigraph would not make sense, or it would produce different meaning, if it was placed elsewhere **[206]**. In terms of its temporal positioning, the transformation of the 'Banque De Grèce' epigraph into 'Banque De Merkel' would make different sense if did not occur on 29.09.2012, i.e. two days after the announcement of Chancellor Merkel's planned visit in Athens on 09.10.2012. Also, one should not overlook the fact that, in the domestic discourse, EU officials – and Chancellor Merkel in particular – are unpopular due to their promoted harsh austerity policies. The fact that the name Merkel is written in Greek further highlights the struggle to position the bank as something which ought to be Greek but is considered to be not. The meaning of the graffito becomes more multifaceted when it is examined along with the other writings of the same set (G) with which it temporarily co-existed before being obliterated: #G01 circles and crosses over the English epigraph at the front portico and reads 'The Thieves are here', whereas #G04 at the back entrance transforms the French 'Banque De Grèce' epigraph to 'Banque De Berlin' questioning the ownership of the BoG **[207]**. This questioning is a recurring theme – at least from the beginning of the crisis – and if one examines this in its historical perspective – by bringing together other related writings from different sets-times – then #G02 acquires a completely different meaning. And, of course, this kind of reading underscores the palimpsestuous nature of the surface. The graffito is further complicated if it is read in relation to the subsequent and in close proximity writing #G03 – which reads 'Their Riches Our Blood' – as the dialogue they develop suddenly makes one wonder to whose 'riches' the slogan is referring to: the bankers or Merkel's? **[208]** The meanings that the writing conveys become even more complex when we consider it in the photographic frame together with the presence of the armed policeman who wears a gas mask. Is the riot policeman responsible for 'our blood', or was he put there by those who are thought to be under control of the bank, i.e. Chancellor Merkel? **[209]** Some photographs, however, contribute more in the understanding of a graffito than the writing itself. For instance, #M01 reads 'Burn It' which is an obviously aggressive – albeit quite common (e.g., #D08, #F04, #I01: 'Burn the Banks') – invitation to attack the image of this institution. Yet, the 'invitation' in this occasion happens while the building is on fire **[210]**. The writing reflects the very moment of its production, an aspect that one would miss without looking at the series of images that capture the writer in action and, at the same time, the circumstances under which the graffito takes place.

Despite of the large number of writings and the continuous effort of writers to change the appearance of the BoG building, its surfaces constantly look untouched from the 'crisis'.[308] The elevation drawings, however, show exactly the opposite. The drawings become a kind of an x-ray showing what stands beneath the seemingly spotless façade while, at the same time, reaffirming the palimpsestuous character of the writing surface. By superimposing all the writing layers on the elevations, the drawings are capable of capturing the different rhythms and synchronicities of the site's image transformations caused by graffiti. They record what once was and disclose what could have been if no removal practices had taken place. They also capture the different conditions of the writing surfaces: from pristine to polluted and back. The drawings could not reveal more emphatically the constant battle over the image of the BoG and the power struggle over what is worth preserving and erasing. Also, they blatantly show the importance of spatio-temporal positioning in the understanding of these signs. By bringing back to life these repressed stories, it is rendered visible how the ephemeral and marginal challenges the seemingly immobile, permanent, and unquestioned authority of the image of a building.

3.2.8. Beliefs and Motives of Iconoclasts: Spoiling the Image of the Bank of Greece

Contemporary iconoclastic practices, such as wall writing, refer to any intentional physical damage of a – broadly defined – icon regardless of what it represents or its mode of representation (e.g., artwork, architecture, etc.). Visual culture scholar W.J.T. Mitchell defines iconoclasm as the practice of defacement or destruction of images and considers it to be the best starting point to initiate the discussion on the nature of "offensive images", as he terms them.[309] For Mitchell, images are 'offensive' when they cause reactions due to their content, form or placement. People offended by images often offend them back, and Mitchell identifies two beliefs at play when this happens. The first is that images are linked to the beliefs and/or ideologies that they represent, and thus "whatever is done to the image is somehow done to what it stands for".[310] The second is that images are considered to have an "animated living character" and are equipped with their own agency that enables them to 'feel' what is done to them. In other words, images are often treated as "pseudopersons ... [as] responsible and responsive social beings".[311] It is this belief in the animated nature the image that leads an iconoclast to physically damage it in order to attack the belief that engendered it.

Art historian David Freedberg has extensively studied the power of images to invite reactions. More specifically, his "theory of response" examines how artworks, whether two-dimensional images or three-dimensional objects and buildings, become subjects of responses in different epochs.[312] Freedberg highlights the importance of examining iconoclasms in their social and political context, and seeks to recognise the motives of iconoclastic acts.[313] He identifies three common motivations in different iconoclastic movements: the first is that of attention-seeking, the second is related to the "hold a particular image has on imagination", while the third has to do with the belief that "by damaging the symbols of power one somehow diminishes that power itself".[314] All three motives seem to be at play in contemporary iconoclastic acts in Athens.

The fact that iconoclastic gestures often take a spectacular public form further highlights the importance of public attention to the act. This is also the case in politicized urban writings in Athens because, as my BoG record cards suggest, all the writings were produced during demonstrations. Also, it seems that urban writers know that during a mass protest their writings will draw the attention of the press and will be mediatised. Further, by targeting neoclassical buildings, Athenian wall writers do acknowledge the 'hold' these edifices enjoy in the contemporary Greek national imagination and seek to spoil it. Even more specifically, they know the eminent role of the BoG as a symbol of financial power and try to diminish it by attacking its image, i.e. its historical building. Freedberg, in a later article, further investigates the motivating factors of iconoclasms arguing that iconoclasts are also driven by the desire to "draw attention to a felt social injustice".[315] This seems to be the case with the BoG building, in the context of today's particular social and political crisis. In fact, there is a whole list of cases in central Athens wherein the image of buildings or statues is considered to be a symbol of an established order. State buildings and bank branches are those targeted most frequently as they are seen as symbols of the current financial and social inequality.

309 Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005). *What do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 126.

310 Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005). *What do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 127.

311 Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005). *What do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 127.

312 Freedberg, D. (1989). *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

313 Freedberg, D. (1985). *Iconoclasts and their Motives*. Maarssen: Schwartz. p. 13.

314 Freedberg, D. (1985). *Iconoclasts and their Motives*. Maarssen: Schwartz. p. 25.

315 Freedberg, D. (1992). Iconoclasm and Idolatry. In D. E. Cooper (Ed.), *A Companion to Aesthetics* (pp. 341-343). Oxford: Blackwell. p. 341.

Bruno Latour, in the edited volume *Iconoclash*, highlights the power of image worship and destruction in three distinct domains: science, religion and art. In order to underline the contested nature of images and their capacity to both attract and repel, captivate and offend, he terms the conflicts they trigger "iconoclashes". For him, iconoclash is "when one does not know, one hesitates, one is troubled by an action for which there is no way to know, without further enquiry, whether it is destructive or constructive".[316] In a similar vein, anthropologist Michael Taussig asserts that defacement – the act of damaging the surface or the appearance of an object – is productive, "[it] is like Enlightenment ... [it] works on objects the way jokes work on language, bringing out of their inherent magic especially when those objects have become routinized".[317] Defacement releases the potential meanings of an object that are meant to be fortified and unquestioned. For Taussig, it is an act that renders visible, without changing it, a taken for granted established order, or what he terms "public secret ... that which is generally known but cannot be articulated".[318]

Defacement brings the 'depth', or rather the 'secret', to the surface. Here, this power of defacement to reveal the sanctity of specific iconic buildings is crucial. The constant effort to reface the specific edifices, or rather the continuous attempt to secure their 'reading' by censoring particular layers of writings, renders visible that the politics of the image of place are perpetually under negotiation. From the record cards emerges that the average life time of the marks is two days. This suggests that writings pose a threat to the building's image as they invite immediate responses. Every attempt to restore the previous pristine image of the Bank is motivated by the will to preserve the original, unquestioned meanings that its façade should communicate. Through iconoclasm, the once 'offensive' image of the bank – at least for the urban writers – is transformed into a new image that is offensive to the BoG institution.

316 Latour, B. (2002). What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World beyond the Image Wars? In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (pp. 15-40). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 16.

317 Taussig, M. (1999). *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. p. 3, 5.

318 Taussig, M. (1999). *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. p. 5.

3.2.9. Writing and Removal: Oppositional, Supplementary or Iconoclastic Gestures?

The fact that bodies do not use language to express themselves, it does not mean that they do not 'speak': bodies signify. The bodies in action add an extra layer of meaning in this practice; and so do the imprints of these gestures on the surface. The rhetoric of the postures and the way both graffiti writers and removers are (re)presented in images are important in understanding the agency of writing. In both cases, human agency is directed towards the city itself while transforming the architectural surface into a battleground. In this short subsection I attempt a close examination of the gestures of these seemingly 'opposite' sides.

There are two types of graffiti writers that act on the BoG: the slogan writer and the paint thrower. Their gestures share some common characteristics. Their identity is concealed since their faces are not shown because they either wear hoodies to avoid being caught by the street surveillance cameras, or gas masks to cope with the tear gases in the demonstration [211]. Also, they are photographically captured from the back. Their outfit is not only dirty and informal but also relatively large to facilitate physical movement and to conceal the body shape of the writers. The clothes cover almost every inch of their bodies. The body in both cases is unruly and in motion. The paint throwers are barely standing; their bodies are in tension trying to reach the target. On the other hand, slogan writers operate more carefully – albeit quickly – since they are close to, or almost touching, the writing surface [212]. The posture is aggressive as it embodies the tension of the moment of its execution. The context in which each graffito is produced – i.e. that of the demonstration – should not be overlooked: noise, people shouting slogans and riot police nearby. Graffitists operate in an exceptional state and they need to be quick and effective [213]. Also, their gestures embody the spectacular character of the demonstration. Even though they seem to act as individuals, they are not alone but part of a group; members of an anonymous crowd.

Contrary, the graffiti buffers wear uniforms and their outfit is clinical (e.g., surgery gloves, etc.) to avoid potential injuries that the chemicals might cause [214]. The body posture here is stable and cautious, almost immobile. The trained hand repeats over and over again the same circular gesture in a very small area of the wall. The body is docile and the facial expression is calm. The hairy hand of the buffer is a stereotypical symbol of his middle-class origin [215]. Although he is a part of a larger cleaning team, the buffer seems to be alone. Although anonymous, the buffer's face is always visible even though it embodies the faceless power.

Writers deface, buffers reface; graffitists' writing gesture is considered destructive while the buffers' is constructive. Writing is aggressive while its removal is thought as restorative. The writer acts during the event whereas the buffer comes at the aftermath of the event, when the city is back to its everyday normal rhythm. Yet, both gestures share a common ground: the material substrate. Both subjects need one another: the one supplements the other in this game of violence and counter-violence. The reciprocal relationship of the gestures of the writer and buffer couldn't be more emphatic in the moment that the photograph freezes and the writings appear semi-removed but still legible [216].



A graffitist caught writing the #F03 slogan (I-δ14-ζ16) on 12.02.2012 whilst concealing his identity with a hat and hoodie.

211
K09



Graffitist almost touches the BoG surface to write the #A02 slogan (I-δ15-ζ17) during a demonstration on 05.05.2010.

212
K09

A graffitist executing hastily the #I05 graffiti (I-δ22-ζ24) on 24.11.2012.

213
K09





A worker with clinical outfit removes the #J01 graffito (II-γ19-ε21) from the BoG epigraph on 20.02.2013.

214
K09

By repeating the same circular gesture over a small space, a worker removes the #D01 - #D05 graffiti (I-δ14-ζ16) from the BoG epigraph on 15.09.2011.

215
K09



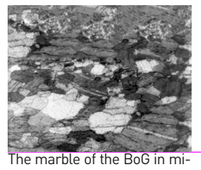


A maintenance worker scrubs #I01 (I-δ14-ζ16) graffiti from the BoG epigraph on 26.11.2012

216
K09

The marble epigraph of the Bank of Greece.





The marble of the BoG in microscopic view (x20).

217
K09

319

Latour, B. (2002). What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World beyond the Image Wars? In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (pp. 15-40). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 24. The visual result in the cases where graffiti is not removed with chemicals but covered with paint is even more impressively indicative of Latour's quote. For example, the film *Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal*, which examines this cover up process, vividly illustrates how supplementary and iconoclastic both writing and its erasure can be. McCormick, M., & Kalin, A. (Dir.). (2001). *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal, Peripheral Produce Video no12*. New York, NY: Independent Distribution.

218
K09

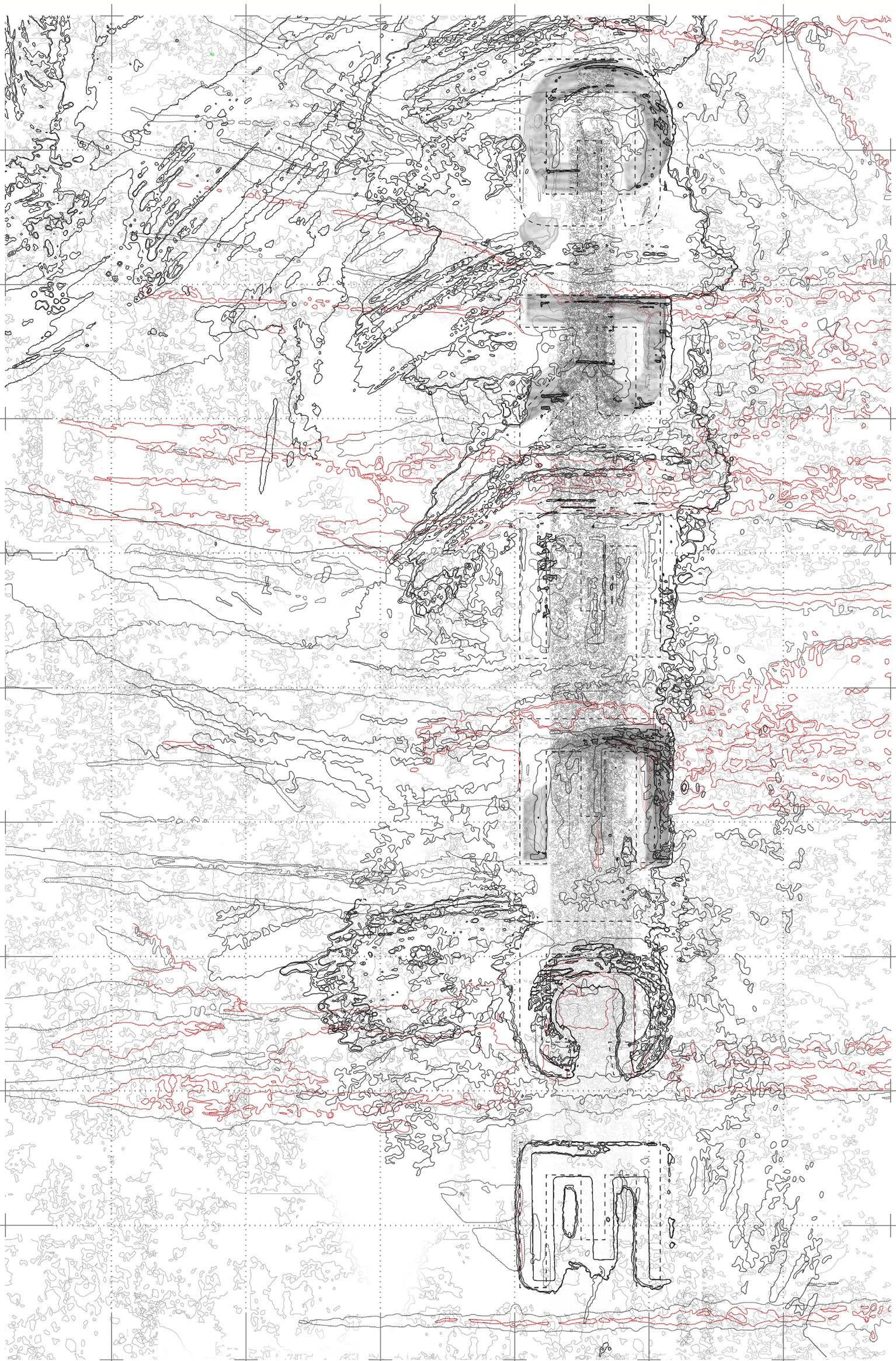
320

Moropoulou, A., Tsiourva, T., Bisbikou, K., Tsantila, V., Biscontin, G., Longega, G., Groggia, M., Dalaklis, E., & Petritaki, A. (2002). Evaluation of Cleaning Procedures on the Facades of the Bank of Greece Historical Building in the Center of Athens. *Building and Environment, 37*(7), 753–760.

321

Flusser, V. (2011/1987). *Does Writing Have a Future?* (N. A. Roth, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. p. 14.

In order to explore the meeting of these two seemingly 'opposite' sides a bit further, I made a close up, 1:1 drawing of the epigraph of the portico upon which both the writings and their erasures appear **[217]**. I outlined the writings as they were shown in specific photographs and traced the contours of their removal as they were depicted in images that captured a particular moment of the buffing process. In that sense, erasure is not considered removal but another layer of writing; or as Latour puts it, "to erase the writing at the same time you are writing it".[319] For the material surface I used a fibber optics microscopic image of the particular marble **[218]** on the specific building which was produced in order to evaluate the cleaning procedures of the BoG.[320] I have also drawn the epigraphs and some other marks that appear within the limits of the wall I have set. This layering technique renders visible that the writings, as well as the erasures, largely ignore the patina of surface, as opposed to the K4 inscriptions which emanate from the material substrate. Most importantly, however, the drawing reveals that the line between defacement and refacement, destruction and (re)construction, iconoclasts and iconolaters, is fine or even nonexistent. If Flusser is right when arguing that "the gesture of writing does not move directly against an object but rather indirectly, through an image or with the intervention of an image ... inscription is iconoclastic",[321] and since removal is yet another layer of writing, then both gestures can be considered iconoclastic. Both attack the surface and change its image and, in so doing, produce a different one.



3.2.11. Disseminating Iconoclash: From Defacement to Refacement and Back

Latour identifies an inherent paradox in every iconoclastic act, i.e. that image destruction coexists with image production. For him, image attacks renew the attacked images.[322] In and upon the targeted object, iconoclasts not only recognise its power but also reinforce it. Regardless of the damage caused, in the action of destruction the targeted image affirms its power and is further fetishised by the attacker: from nothing in itself, the object becomes a powerful symbol where (counter-)beliefs are mirrored. Though, at the same time, as Joseph Koerner argues, the image becomes "a representation once again" transforming "image breakers to image makers".[323]

For Latour images are important because "allow one to move to another image, exactly as frail and modest as the former one – but different" and sees iconoclash as a "cascade" of pictures coming from a particular site.[324] Iconoclastic acts are not concerned with the images per se. Although iconoclasts physically attack objects, their actions are directed at what the images stand for. The final aim of the gesture is not to harm the physical object – i.e. the medium through which beliefs are manifest or even imposed – but the beliefs that engender it. This is the reason why iconoclastic gestures are partially destructive, because, as Mitchell argues, the objective is not to cause the disappearance of an image but to change its appearance in such a way that becomes offensive to what it represents.[325] Especially in the case of wall writing, it is obvious that the destruction is only superficial. Urban writing defaces as its aim is not to destroy but rather to change the appearance of an object in order to induce a new meaning. Paint damages the image of the wall not the wall itself. As technical reports concerned with the cleaning procedures of the BoG building evince, it is not the addition but rather the removal of a writing layer that damages the material surface.[326]

Iconoclastic gestures tend to be partial and localized. The commonest features damaged in representational images and statues are the eyes or the face of the figure(s) they depict [219]. When the target is a building, the façade – i.e. the "face" of the edifice and its main entrance in particular – receives most damage. This is clearly the case in the BoG building. The entrance is not only monumental in size and imposing due to its use, but it is also the place where all the symbolic features of the BoG are concentrated (e.g., marble claddings, epigraphs, flags, etc.) [220]. The case of the three epigraphs on the portico – one large one on top and two smaller ones on each wall – is indicative. These elements are integral parts of the whole sensitive and, at the same time, symbolic design of the façade. The same linguistic message, i.e. the name of the Bank, would produce different impact and meanings if other fonts, colours, and methods of production were used. Engraving in the 'noblest of materials' conveys permanence and ensures durability; the classical Greek font chosen signifies a specific bond with a glorious past; the gold colour of the letters indexes wealth. Further, the two smaller epigraphs, both written with geometric sans serif letters,[327] seek to show the international appeal of the BoG: the one on the left wall is in English, the most popular language on the globe, while the second on the right appears in French, namely in the so considered sophisticated language of diplomacy and international relations. It is this semiotically rich and heavily symbolic image that urban writers attack [221].

Graffitists deliberately write on the walls where the Bank's epigraphs are positioned. The agents anticipate, or rather know in advance, that their actions will be recorded, reported and distributed on the internet and thus seek to give to their global audience at least a hint of the context.

322 Latour, B. (2002). What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World beyond the Image Wars? In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (pp. 15-40). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 20.

323 Koerner, J. (2002). The Icon as Iconoclash. In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (pp. 164-213). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 183, 189.

324 Latour, B. (2002). What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World beyond the Image Wars? In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (pp. 15-40). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 32.

325 Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005). *What do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. p. 132.

326 Moropoulou, A., Tsiourva, T., Bisbikou, K., Tsantila, V., Biscontin, G., Longega, G., Groggia, M., Dalaklis, E., & Petritaki, A. (2002). Evaluation of Cleaning Procedures on the Facades of the Bank of Greece Historical Building in the Center of Athens. *Building and Environment, 37*(7), 753–760. p. 758.

219 K09 The face of Rigas Feraios' statue sitting in front of the University building is defaced during the 2008 Youth Uprising.

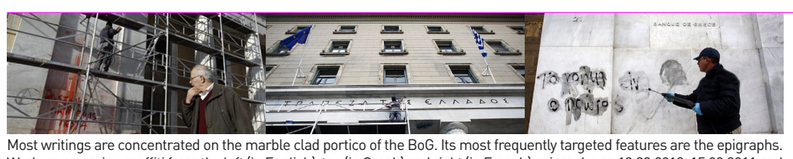


220 K09 The portico of the BoG on Panepistimiou Ave is the place where all the symbolic features of the building are concentrated. Worth noting are the three epigraphs: two small ones on the side walls and one on the top.



327 The two small epigraphs of the BoG were originally written with the 'Bank Gothic' font. They have been replaced in both entrances (Panepistimiou and Stadiou Street) due to severe damages they suffered during a mass and riotous protest that took place on 12.02.2012.

221 K09



Most writings are concentrated on the marble clad portico of the BoG. Its most frequently targeted features are the epigraphs. Workers removing graffiti from the left (in English), top (in Greek) and right (in French) epigraphs on 13.02.2012, 15.09.2011 and 07.07.2015 respectively.

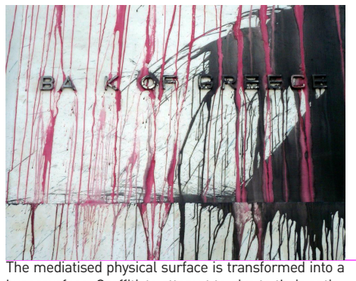
Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen believe that inscriptions are highly dependent upon technology as the latter defines their impact and perception. They identify three types of 'inscription technologies': the technologies of the hand (e.g., painting); the technologies of recording, or analogue technologies (e.g., photography); and the digital synthesizing technologies (e.g., computer interfaces).[328] The writings on the Bank of Greece are not only viewed on the actual surfaces on which they are produced, but increasingly through different surfaces (e.g., photographs or computer screens). In a sense, graffiti are produced by human hand, then recorded using analogue techniques, and finally digitally distributed and perceived. In other words, graffiti is initially produced in an inscription mode which is radically different from its mode of reception.

The online graffiti images are not only evidence of the particular writing events but, most probably, also the ultimate goal of the graffitists: the writings take place not to be read but to produce the specific images. What the writings say is equally, if not less, important to what the produced images do on the online environments they exist and circulate. It seems that the function of the BoG building attracts media attention, making it one of the most oft-photographed spots in Athens during the last years. Yet, the photographic reporting neutralizes the event by erasing its temporal dimension but, at the same time, records it and salvages it from oblivion. Despite the evidential status of photographs, we should not overlook the fact that someone is behind the camera, and frames an event through a particular viewpoint.[329] Due to graffiti's ephemeral nature, this seems to be a necessity, which means taking the picture right after its execution and before it is damaged or erased (e.g., during or just after a rally). But there is also an intention behind that. Photographers manipulate the compositional power of the medium to convey certain meanings. Through their choices of different frames, photojournalists narrate their experiences and dress their representations with atmospheres. For instance, most of the images that one can find on the internet frame the central entrance of the BoG including beggars, protesters, or riot policemen. The captions and titles used in the corresponding online articles are also carefully chosen and are far from accidental: the words 'riots', 'crisis', and 'debt' often accompany photographs depicting graffiti on the BoG building. In a sense, these writings are seen by the media as synonyms of crisis. Eventually, the message of the image is neither on the slogan itself, nor on what the image depicts only. Rather, the message is constituted by the image-caption interplay: the viewer is skilfully directed to receive not only the visual but also the latent cultural message that the author of the article wants to get across.

The photographs only partially reveal the context and/or the surrounding. Yet, the majority of photographs that capture the BoG building do not accidentally focus on the portico; mark producers direct photographers to do so [222]. Lyman Chaffee, in his work on politicized street art in Hispanic Countries, argues that if a graffito "makes the pages of dailies or weeklies, or is carried on the nightly news, its message has been disseminated effectively".[330] Of course, today one needs to update Chaffee's quote to include the online front pages of major global media. In other words, writers launch their attacks over these elements of the portico to make them look different and spoil the beliefs that gave them birth. Yet, the portico is not a single material surface that exists only in physical world. Its various mediated reproductions transform the physical surface into a 'hypersurface'. Wall writers attempt to spoil both the actual and digital image of the BoG. The representations of writings on the web are expected to last longer and circulated more widely, thus ensuring that the defaced object will remain in 'public' view.

328 Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge. p. 233.

329 Building upon Chmielewska (2009), we developed a similar line of thought regarding the use of graffiti photography in Avramidis, K., & Drakopoulou, K. (2015). Moving From Urban to Virtual Spaces and Back: Learning In/From Signature Graffiti Subculture. In P. Jandrić & D. Boras (Eds.), *Critical Learning in Digital Networks* (pp. 133-160). New York, NY: Springer.



The mediatised physical surface is transformed into a hypersurface. Graffitists attempt to give to their anticipated global audience some sort of context. Defacing the BoG epigraph serves this cause.

222
K09

330 Chaffee, L. (1993). *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular Tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. p. 32.

This chapter demonstrated that streets and building façades are sites where competing agents meet to articulate beliefs and negotiate supremacy. Yet, the field upon which these struggles take place – i.e. the architectural surface – is not a tabula rasa. Contrary, it is loaded with conventions and symbolisms that are culturally distinct. The 'face' of architecture is a privileged place where beliefs are imposed and counter-beliefs are expressed. Ultimately, what emerges from the study of this situation is that, in order to appreciate any kind of conflict, one must pay attention to the specific context in which it occurs. In addition to the explicit visual characteristics of a place, one needs to bring into the discussion its implicit qualities, such as historical developments, symbolic meanings and cultural particularities. In this chapter I tried to capture as many facets of parietal writing as possible and to show the – often neglected – complexity of this iconoclastic gesture in its specific context. The practice of wall writing – coupled with the reactions it invites – is a paradigmatic case of the Latourian concept of 'iconoclash':[331] the vicious circle of "fascination, repulsion, destruction, atonement" that images cause. Despite the constant effort to eradicate these marks, "they always return again".

331 Latour, B. (2002). What is Iconoclash? Or is there a World beyond the Image Wars? In B. Latour & P. Weibel (Eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (pp. 15-40). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 17.



BACK TO SITUATION 0: RE-SITUATING ATHENIAN INSCRIPTIONS



4.1. Upsetting And Resetting The Scene: Rewriting Athens

Situations condition graffiti. They occasion the 'architecture of graffiti', i.e. its structural order. Part of graffiti's architecture is to work *against existing orders*, stretching the limits of the matrices within which it operates. In the OCC exhibition, however, graffiti is perfectly framed within the limits of the institution and, therefore, these marks are no longer graffiti but representations of graffiti. And this is the reason why I keep referring to *three plus one* instead of four graffiti situations; because the OCC can barely qualify as a graffiti situation since the pieces it hosts are more artworks than graffiti.

In this thesis, I record space conventionally – i.e. plans, sections, elevations – as a matrix that is brought to an empirical measure but in that empirical measure I have all this data which is not normally seen as data to be conveyed in such sort of drawings. In so doing, these drawings demonstrate the virtuality of the measured reality they seek to capture. The different design methods tested in each case study reveal something different than expected: they reveal a gap in the methods which, in turn, reveals something about graffiti.

As every design endeavour, this research did not develop in a linear manner. The first situation explored was the contemporary one and the BoG HQ building was set as the first design testing ground. This situation offers a more empirical measure, a kind of survey fetish, a survey of what is being surveyed. By the time I get to K4 the qualitative is already in the measure itself that is drawn so fastidiously. Here, the data is clear: it's all the graffiti itself. The content of the inscriptions suggests movements in the dungeons and allude to places external to them. Most importantly, what is revealed is that there are rooms without graffiti. In the AP a different design technique is tested which throws up the very question of method much more clearly because of the inconsistency between the systems of measure (line drawing and photography). In these 'error' moments – which are present in all cases but a bit more evident in the AP – there is something meaningful that has to do with the inability of technologising and measuring reality that creates this lack of coincidence.

The errors of the drawings make them very disturbing – nearly intolerable – for the architect, who by definition seeks for precision. This disturbance reveals the very nature of graffiti. The basis of graffiti seems to be this escape from the tyranny of architectural precision. There is a demand of imprecision that needs to be explicit so as to be acceptable: what you don't want as a graffiti writer is precision. In the drawings of graffiti what we are constantly getting is a kind of tension between the empirical system of measure and this sort of would-be reality that we get to understand through it. This is an issue that has to do with the spatial relations of graffiti, the spatiality of graffiti. The way to find an answer to this is by the multiple systems of enacting the survey where I find the inadequacy of each method in each condition. If the architectural matrix is the order, then the imposition of another graffiti matrix challenges – or occasionally conforms to – this order. This is the spatiality of graffiti and it is the lack of alignment that reveals it. In the beginning of this thesis I claim that my aim is to expose the hidden spatiality of graffiti. The reason why I call this hidden is because it is difficult to discern; because you need to see four in one. The hidden spatiality of graffiti writing requires an atlas to convey its mappings. The nature of the mapping puts the three plus one situations into relationships. Spatiality, eventually, is the spatial condition of interconnectedness of the situations.



In this study I analyse three plus one situations which are related, albeit differentiated, in spatial and temporal terms. They account – in a limited sense – for graffiti in Athens. The design treatment of the thesis produces interconnections and overlays among different situations, offering an original geographical re-coding of the (graffiti landscape of the) city. By including this in the 'Atlas of Athenian Inscriptions' and placing it as one of a set of the other three more overt surface ruptures in political edifices, the OCC exhibition is framed as an equally political situation. Regardless of the different degrees of gratification and resistance in each writing situation – with the most desperate being the crude marks of existence in the Detention Centre and the most pathetic being the pieces in the OCC – when these are brought together in the same Atlas, their heterogeneous political graduations are combined with one another and the critical voice of the one migrates to the other. This is what eventually matters in the situations examined here: the sets of relationships they weave between each other allowing critical attributes to be transferred between them which, in turn, affects how we read them together. It is then quite possible, for example, to recognise that there is a clear correspondence between the writers in the K4 and those in OCC. Both are underground, in secluded environments, and write on bear walls in a tag-like fashion. The former write to inscribe their presence in the world while the latter to declare their presence in the art world. However, the OCC artworks conform to the architectural matrix of the basement as well as the cultural demands imposed by the institution, whereas the inscriptions in K4 stretch the matrix of the – poor in spatial references – dungeons and challenge prison as institution designated to deprive inmates from having a voice.

The series of terms emerging from the design explorations – and their inter-associating nature – is one of the offerings of this Atlas. These are being set up as potential frameworks of criticality that any subsequent reader could apply in any (graffiti) situation and site. This is not to say that these terms are correct because I write about them or can be found in this work, nor I claim that they are the only ones characterising graffiti writing. Rather, the contribution lies in the fact that the by-design mode illuminates them in a particular way. The point of my three main situations is to give rise to these conceptual pairs – i.e. hieroglyphic images, palimpsestic texts and iconoclastic gestures – and through the design methodology show that their attributes are transferable from one situation to the other. This given, the slogans of the AP might be better understood through an iconoclastic framework. Similarly, the temporality and sequencing of the BoG's writings might need a palimpsestic approach to be appreciated in full. Also, the non-linguistic marks on the BoG seem to require a hieroglyphic reading. Given that the surfaces of K4 have been wiped out several times, we might have to imagine a palimpsestic condition of 'contamination' happening between these layers. We may also consider the crude marks on K4's interior surfaces as iconoclastic gestures against a space of confinement or against the very nature of 'proper' writing (with which many inmates are not familiar). Further, the pairings of the terms are also interchangeable. Instead of palimpsestic texts we can think of palimpsestic gestures and rather than hieroglyphic images we can begin seeking for hieroglyphic texts or gestures in every graffiti situation.

The OCC exhibition might be accused of eviscerating the critical potency of graffiti by de-situating it from its urban and political context whilst placing it neutrally to adorn the art institution with graffiti as gallery surface ornamentation, reducing any radical and critical vocality to mere romantic aestheticisation, empty gestures and egoistical fetish. The thesis was generated

from a critique of this exhibition. This point of departure enabled the adoption of a particular critical position and the development of means of discussing graffiti without aesthetisation. Shifting the focus from the study of graffiti in plural form to each singular graffito, from the subjects of writing to the material objects of writing and from the content or aesthetics of writing to its context, this research avoids undermining graffiti writing. Graffiti are increasingly treated opportunistically as mere aesthetic objects or fleeting images detached from their original contexts. Contrary, here each graffito is situated back and examined in relation to the spatial and historical context in which it was produced. I avoid discussing the aesthetics of graffiti – the most seductive and, at the same time, commonly abused characteristic of graffiti – and rather focus on its situating features embedding these inscriptions into their spatio-temporal – and by extension, political – contexts. In so doing, this dissertation offers means to study graffiti without aestheticisation or cooptation.

The 'Atlas of Athenian Inscriptions' is the description of my personal looking, my own way of mapping and creating relationships, and as such it is by no means objective or definitive. The Atlas is not a conclusion but the means by which I begin to articulate the graffiti of Athens. In itself it is inconclusive; it is a by design piece of research that enabled me to come to terms with the material progressively and frame it in such a way that some of those contingencies are live and some have been foreshortened by the (design) nature of the enquiry. This thesis doesn't pretend to be anything but that. Given that the graffitied walls of Athens are like a perpetually incomplete artwork that is generously offered to the city, every time that we attempt to reconstruct this jigsaw image we always end up missing something. In the process, we resituate these inscriptions and make the Athenian graffiti landscape anew. The ephemeral and constantly in-the-making character of Athenian inscriptions invites for further research: more imaginative connections between different surfaces, sites and times can be drawn; new inter-applicable graphic systems can be revealed by design; and, of course, countless writing situations can be closely studied through and for their inscriptions. Depending on one's disciplinary position and interests, future research on graffiti in Athens can follow any of the aforementioned routes or many other potential directions.

There are several ways in which I would like to extend this research building upon the material gathered and produced in this thesis. A future research path could take the form of three speculative design proposals in Athens that would weave a critical, graffiti-inspired network: a redesign of Korai Square; an intervention at Athens Polytechnic entrance gate; and a redesign of the Bank of Greece portico claddings.[332] This dissertation is presented as a designed book object characterised by a curatorial interiority. I am particularly interested in exploring further and critically reflecting upon the book object not only as a means to represent research material in a designerly manner but also a site enabling a new spatiality to emerge.[333] Moreover, I would like to push the curatorial dimensions of this thesis further by testing it in the form of a situated exhibition in Athens, one that addresses issues such as orientation, sequence and coding of the (graffitied) city – where the architectural and graffiti matrices meet – in a different scale. The different modes explored in this research have also raised subtle questions regarding the similarities between graffiti writing and architectural drawing:[334] instead of 'writing graffiti' and 'drawing architecture' one could see the potentials of 'drawing graffiti' and 'writing architecture'. The thesis identified as the common denominator between (graffiti) writing and (architectural) drawing the notion of 'trace' that – coming conceptually and materially together with the surface

I've made some initial thoughts on how these projects could materialise and found some architectural precedents that could potentially inform the development of these speculative proposals. For K4, two relevant precedents could be 'The Pits' in Canterbury UK by Janet Hodgson and the 'Nearamnew' in Melbourne by Paul Carter. An obvious precedent for the AP's gate is the 40 Bond Street gate in Manhattan by Herzog & de Meuron. In contrast to their generic use of tags, however, in my case it would be a combination of the situated material. Another related precedent for the AP project could be the recently implemented 'Shadows of Memory' in Granada designed by Carmen Moreno Álvarez. As far as the BoG is concerned, I wished to propose a new relief cladding for its portico. Responding to capitalism in this way might sound superficial, yet I think in the power of small and caustic gestures. In this case, two interesting precedents could be the Eberswalde Library in Berlin by Herzog & de Meuron and the GS1 headquarters in Lisbon by Vhils.

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A publication which is due on the subject, i.e. examining – by design means – the (art) book as a form of spatial practice and design outcome, is the following: Macken, M. (2018). *Binding Space: The Book as Spatial Practice*. London: Routledge.

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In the case of the 'Tchoban Foundation - Museum for Architectural Drawing' in Berlin designed by Speech Architectural Office, this relationship between writing and drawing couldn't be more overtly evident. The surfaces of the buildings bear inscriptions of architectural drawings thus blurring the line between drawing and writing, image and text, even further.

upon which the gesture is exercised – offers rich opportunities for deeper theoretical and design explorations.[335]

Graffiti is often understood as act of dissent because it operates in the mythology that there should be a consensus. Architecture, on the other hand, is presented as the par excellence consensual intervention in the city. So, it is natural for graffiti to appear as dissent upon consensual edifices. The critical exchange between graffiti and architecture can show, however, that there is never an image of complete consensus or dissensus. The three plus one situations examined here emphatically demonstrate that there are nuances of consensus and dissensus in each case. In a sense, the thesis reveals the mythology that architecture – in any way – represents consensus and graffiti dissensus, since each is embedded in the other. What I'm doing in the process is a kind of act of, on the one hand, conformity – by using 'consensual' architectural means to represent graffiti – and, on the other, radicality, because I'm dissenting against these very means by graffiting my own drawings. The book-atlas, by setting up the situations, reveals through the critique of graffiti the dialogue that is in play in these institutions in the Athenian milieu.

The design studies of and textual commentary on the situations of this dissertation highlight the need for careful examination of graffiti writings in various scales – from the mark and the surface to the building and the street – and different domains – from cultural and material to political and historical – to appreciate their unique, material and inherently situated character as well as their critical potency. After all, the critical power of parietal writing lies in its *surfacing*: it ruptures the processes of political edification and it frames the situated surfaces of specific edifices upon which it makes its marks. Even though graffiti keeps being depoliticised, aestheticised and used as a means of beautification through questionable commissioned projects in contemporary Athens,[336] this thesis by its design nature allows us not only to explore different graphic articulations but also restore the existing, or create new, links between writings and surfaces thus politicising them anew. In its attempt to reconstruct the Athenian graffiti landscape, the Atlas resituates inscriptions in a different conceptual framework and, in so doing, allows us to study and theorize the situating role of graffiti in a new way. In a sense, the most commonly misused attribute of graffiti, i.e. its situating role, is used here to re-appropriate graffiti and give it back its political power.

Ultimately, by considering graffiti's situating character and graphic treatment, this research promotes ruptures to the smoothing of its political asperity attempted by architecture, institutions and those writing on graffiti that seek to restrain it. Graffiti in Athens is echoing *multiple* voices and its critical exchange with architecture reveals the *incongruity* of different matrices. By following the seriality suggested by these voices on the walls of Athens and resituating them here, the Atlas urges us to listen to the voices and speak back to them. There are many ways to speak a situation; even though the natural tendency is to suppress multiple voices and listen to a singular one, Athenian walls invite us to open up to embrace the multiplicity embedded in each situation.

335 A recent book that theoretically addresses similar issues is Johannessen, C. M., & Van Leeuwen, T. (Eds.). (2017). *The Materiality of Writing: A Trace Making Perspective*. London: Routledge.

336 One of the most recent and emblematic examples of graffiti's commodification is the Heart of Athens Graffiti Festival which took place on 12.02.2017 in the occasion of St Valentine's Day. The event is sponsored by Heart of Athens Hotel and takes place at the narrow and degraded Louka Nika Street just a few metres farther from the Hotel in the gentrified – and full of graffiti – Psyrri area. The resulting mural consists of several individual graffiti and street art pieces. Interestingly, all but two participating graffitists were also contributors to the OCC exhibition as well, showing how graffitists capitalise the fame they gained in the streets and the institutions. For a detailed photographic coverage of the event see Greekstreetart.gr (2017). *Heart of Athens Graffiti Festival*. Available at: http://www.greekstreetart.gr/post/157531591785/heart-of-athens-graffiti-festival-organized-the. Accessed: 16 February 2017.


ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΣ Γ. ΣΚΙΑΔΑΣ
ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΤΙΚΗ
ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΤΙΚΗ Διαδρομή στο χρόνο και
ΝΕΟΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΙΚΗ
ΣΚΟΤΕΙΝΗ ΕΠΤΑΕΤΙΑ 1967-1974: η δικτατορία των συνταγματαρχών
ΠΟΛΥΤΕΧΝΕΙΟ 1973 40 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΑΣΗ
X-ΑΡΧΕΙΑ
uncensored
ΤΑ ΣΥΝΘΗΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ GRAFFITI
ΤΩΝ ΕΞΑΡΧΕΙΩΝ, 2009-2012

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5.2. Figures

CHAPTER 0

Cover 0 'Creasing' by graffitist iNO. Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014. Photographer: George Gounezos. Source: Karra, M. (Ed.). (2014). *No Respect*. Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre. p. 140.

001 The massive work 'Creasing' by famous Greek graffitist iNO occupies the exterior of the Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014. Photographer: George Gounezos. Source: http://ino.net/. Accessed: 30 October 2016.

002 Mixed media piece 'Faμe' by artist Nar in the 'No Respect' Exhibition, Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014. Photographer: Author.

003 The 'Wall of Fame' at the entrance of the 'No Respect' Exhibition, Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014. Photographer: Author.

004 The invitation for the 'No Respect' Exhibition opening designed by Beetroot. Source: http://www.infokids.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/securedownload.jpg.Accessed: 16 October 2016.

005 Lots of artists and graffiti enthusiasts enjoy their drink surrounded by disrespectful creativity and under the sounds of the invited DJ during the exhibition opening on 11.04.2014. Photographer: Spyros Staveris. Source: http://www.lifo.gr/team/omorfia/47771. Accessed: 20 April 2014.

006 The frontwoman of the Swing Shoes band poses in the 'No Respect' graffiti exhibition at Onassis Cultural Centre. ca 05.2015. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://beater.gr/album-review-sugahpank-a-holy-show/. Accessed: 16 October 2016.

007 Three women in fancy dresses get excited in the view of the graffiti in the 'No Respect' exhibition opening. Photographer: Spyros Staveris. Source: http://www.lifo.gr/team/omorfia/47771. Accessed: 20 April 2014.

008 The New York Times front page in 15.04.2014 dedicated to Athenian graffiti. Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/world/europe/across-athens-graffiti-worth-a-thousand-words-of-malaise.html. Accessed: 10 January 2015.

009 The famous New York Times front page of 21.06.1971 is dedicated to the godfather of graffiti, Greek-born Taki 183. Source: http://www.nytimes.com/1971/07/21/archives/taki-183-spawns-pen-pals.html. Accessed: 10 December 2015.

010 The three books of the 'No Respect' exhibition catalogue. Designed by graffitists-exhibitors duo Studio-Empire. Photographer: Author.

CHAPTER 1

Cover 1 Inscription depicting a detainee behind bars in Room VII. Photographer: Author.

011 Film snapshot from the film Soldiers without Uniform showing the collaborationist threatening the occupant of the building to clean the walls right away. Source: Ioannopoulos, D. (1960). *Soldiers without Uniform*. Athens: IFA Films, around 17'.

012 Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Lick it Until It's Clean' sketch. Ink on paper. Source: Dimitriadis, F. (2004/1946). *Shadow over Athens: 77 Sketches from the Nazi Occupation* (L. Galati & M. Grammenou Eds.). Athens: Modern Times. p. 27.

013 Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Long Live Freedom' sketch. Ink on paper. Source: Dimitriadis, F. (2004/1946). *Shadow over Athens: 77 Sketches from the Nazi Occupation* (L. Galati & M. Grammenou Eds.). Athens: Modern Times. p. 60.

014 Ilias Fertis (1943). 'The Brave Ones: The Wall Writers of Greek Axis Occupation'. Oil on canvas. 88x92cm. Source: Baharian, A., & Antaios, P. (1995/1986). *Artistic Testimonies: Painting-Engraving in War, Occupation and Resistance* (3rd ed.). Athens: Odysseas. p. 154.

015 A. Tassos' engraving (1943). 'EAM EPON', 'Death to traitors', 'Kill the Bulgarian Fascists'. Source: http://www.benaki.gr/index.asp?lang=gr&id=202020001&sid=1831. Accessed: 18 October 2014.

016 Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Writing on Walls' sketch. Ink on paper. Source: Dimitriadis, F. (2004/1946). *Shadow over Athens: 77 Sketches from the Nazi Occupation* (L. Galati & M. Grammenou Eds.). Athens: Modern Times. p. 68.

017 Fokion Dimitriadis' 'Heil and Goodbye' sketch. Ink on paper. Source: Dimitriadis, F. (2004/1946). *Shadow over Athens: 77 Sketches from the Nazi Occupation* (L. Galati & M. Grammenou Eds.). Athens: Modern Times. p. 91.

018 Deliberately damaged walls to deter graffiti. 55 Marasli & Kleomenous St junction. ca 12.1944. Photographer: Petros Poulides. Source: Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation Archive.

019 The Nazi flag raised on the Acropolis, 27.04.194. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation: Photographic Evidence, 1941-1944* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 20.

020 The Benaki Museum at Koumpari St protected by sacks. ca 1941. Photographer: Voula Papaioannou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konsatntinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. p. 136.

021 The Occupation Army forced all the buses to bear the letter V (initial of the Italian word 'Vinceremo'). ca 1941. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation*(3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 134.

022 **(a)** A 'death trolley' collecting dead bodies from the streets of Athens. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 134. **(b)** All 'death trolleys' have one destination, the morgue at Massalias St in Athens city centre. ca 1942. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://freeathens44.org/. Accessed: 18 November 2016.

023 Sign in Ippokratous Street warns the passers-by about potential typhus fever contamination. ca 1943. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 28.

024 **(a)** Starving population searches the trash for food. **(b)** A few metres farther a sign on a kiosk at Aiolou St asks people to mind their deserts. ca 1943. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.).

Athens: Ermis. p. 40, 51.

025 Toponymic signs in Athens turn into Italian. Here the signs at the junction of Academy and Vasilissis Sofias Sts. ca 1942. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 90.

026 The signs of Apollon Cinema in Stadiou St written in three languages. ca 1942. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 37.

027 The film '7 Jahre Pech' [7 Years of Jinx] is screened in Pallas Cinema. The signs written in three languages. Greek appears last. ca 1943. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 34.

028 A slogan at Zaimi St commemorating law student M. Konstantinidis who was assassinated on the spot by the Occupation forces. ca 12.1942. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 149.

029 'People of Athens, oppose massively to the conscription' signed by EAM. ca 1943. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 153.

030 Column at Tositsa and Bouboulinas Streets commemorating NTUA students killed by the Nazi during a rally on 05.03.1943. Photographer: Author.

031 **(a)** EPON members are shot by the Nazis while graffiting the Bank of Greece building. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Bires, K. (2005/1966). *Athens from the 19th to the 20th Century*. Athens: Melissa. p. 339. **(b)** Plaque on the Bank of Greece commemorating EPON member killed by the Nazi during a demonstration on 22.7.1943. Photographer: Author.

032 Slogan on the Panathenaic Stadium: '26th Anniversary of KKE. We Will Ensure Laocracy'. ca 11.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/communist-meeting/-AEZnS3jYcie_g. Accessed: 16 July 2016.

033 Monumental 'EAM' slogan on Zappeion Exhibition Centre staircase. ca 12.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/5AEMhJsnaDo0gw. Accessed: 16 July 2016.

034 The Archaeological Museum covered with slogans praising Greek resistance army and the 'Ellies' (Allies). ca 11.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/_AH3drq7fN5T_g. Accessed: 16 July 2016.

035 Gate-like structure at Korai St reading 'Long Live England, Soviet Union, America'. ca 10.1944. Photographer: United Photojournalists Agency. Source: Nikolaos Tolis Photographic Collection.

036 The extra note on top of the Banner at Syntagma Sq reads 'Hitler and Organisation X ragefully tried to break the Alliance of England America Russia, and because this is unbreakable, they...broke it on paper!!'. ca 10.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/EwFXvthoC34GYw. Accessed: 16 July 2016.

037 **(a)** In liberated Athens, the Allies are welcomed with graffiti. 'Welcome Liberators - Long Live the Gre[at]...'. Photographer: United Photojournalists Agency. Source: Nikolaos Tolis Photographic Collection. **(b)** Slogans on the pavement in front of the Hotel Grande Bretagne at Syntagma Sq read 'Welcome EAM', 'Welcome Great Allies and ELAS Partisans, EAM'. ca 10.1944. Photographer: 6th (Royal Welch) Parachute Battalion. Source https://www.flickr.com/photos/9769477@N04/5136919468. Accessed: 11 June 2015.

038 Athenians welcome the Allies and celebrate the Liberation at Stadiou St on 12.10.1944. Photographer: Voula Papaioannou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konsatntinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. p. 237.

039 A British tank patrols at Kriezotou Street in Athens. Slogan at the back reads 'KKE', 'People will free Greece soon'. 6.12.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: Kessel, D. (1994). *Greece 1944*. Athens: Ammos. p. 92.

040 'EAM' light sign on the foot of Acropolis. 06.12.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: Kessel, D. (1994). *Greece 1944*. Athens: Ammos. p. 70.

041 The National Theatre of Greece during the December Events. Slogan reads 'KKE First Raised the Flag of the Liberation'. ca 12.1944. Photographer: Voula Papaioannou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konstantinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. p. 245.

042 Rebels taking cover in Kidathineon & Nikis Street junction. The slogan reads 'Nafplio - Kerkyra - Haidari: Titles of Honour for KKE and the Greek People - KKE'. ca 12.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: Kessel, D. (1994). *Greece 1944*. Athens: Ammos. p. 87.

043 Athens city centre is divided in two. Barbed wire delimitate the areas under Governmental control. Omonoia Square on 06.12.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: Kessel, D. (1994). *Greece 1944*. Athens: Ammos. p. 88.

044 Graffitists target those who glorified a few days earlier. This graffiti equates Lt Scobie (misspelled 'Scoby') with the Nazis. 04.12.1944. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/funeral-athens-for-23-greek-victims/jwHzzmpRx1OwTA. Accessed: 16 July 2016.

045 **(a)** The K4 once completed in 1938. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Skiadas, E. (1997). *National Insurance Company, from 19th to 21st Century*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 88. **(b)** The K4 during the occupation. The sign installed on the building reads in German 'Ortskommandantur' which means 'District Commander'. ca 4.1941. Source: Papanastasiou, A. (1944). *From the Tragedy of the Enslaved Greece, 1941-1944*. Athens: Independent Production, around 10'.

046 K4 entrance today. Photographer: Author.

047 The National Bank of Greece HQ building at Aiolou St, opposite to the Town Hall, in 1909. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 20.

048 The Rossel's House at 4 Korai St. ca 1895. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Skiadas, E. (1997). *National Insurance Company, from 19th to 21st Century*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 55.

049 The National Bank branch at 6 Sophocleous St, before the addition of the extra storey. ca 1942. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Skiadas, E. (1997). *National Insurance Company, from 19th to 21st Century*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 120.

050 **(a)** K4 bearing the EAM sign. Photographer: Dmitri Kessel. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/50624907. Accessed: 16 July 2016. **(b)** Banner designed by Kostas Grammatopoulos on EAM HQ's facade. ca 10.1944. Photographer: United Photojournalists Agency. Source: Nikolaos Tolis Photographic Collection.

051 **(a)** Sherman tanks and troops of the 5th (Scots) Parachute Battalion intrude to the EAM headquarters at 4 Korai Street. Photographer: No. 2 Army Film & Photographic Unit Morris (Lt). Source: Imperial War Museums Collection. **(b)** Disarming ELAS members and taking them into custody. 6.12.1944. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive.

052 The NIC in 8 Karagiorgi Servias Street in 1963. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 100.

053 The NIC HQ in Syngrou Ave in 2006. Photographer: Pino Musi. Source: http://domesindex.com/buildings/sygkrothma-aeega-h-e8nikh/. Accessed: 4 June 2017.

054 **(a)** Pireaus Bank at 1 Korai St, ca 1962. Photographer: Dimitris Papadimos. Source: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive. **(b)** Bank of Commerce at 5 Korai St, ca 1920. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Hatziioannou, I. (1922) *Panellhnion Lefkoma Ethnikis Ekatontaetiridos 1821-1921: I Xrysi Vivlios tou Ellinismou*. Athens. p. 66. **(c)** Grand Hotel D' Athenes at 2 Korai St, ca 1910. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 49.

055 Cart postal from the cosmopolitan Korai St. ca 1900. Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/athens_greece/8348379193/sizes/k/. Accessed: 11 November 2015.

056 Thomas Mawson's proposal for Athens city centre (1918), characterised by the extension of Korai St. Source: Philippides, D. (1984). *Neohellenic Architecture: Architectural Theory and Practice (1830-1980) as a Reflection of the Ideological Choices of Neohellenic Culture*. Athens: Mellisa. p. 119.

057 Ioannis Antoniadis' proposal for Athens city centre (1941), characterised by the extension of Korai Street. Source: Philippides, D. (1984). *Neohellenic Architecture: Architectural Theory and Practice (1830-1980) as a Reflection of the Ideological Choices of Neohellenic Culture*. Athens: Mellisa. p. 204.

058 The plans of the spaces of the former Nazi Detention Centre produced by the restoration team in 1990. Source: Minos, N. (1991). *Space of Historical Memory, 1941-1944.* Athens: National Insurance Company. pp. 8-9.

059 The plans of NIC building in 4 Korai St. Source: Directorate of Protection and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Monuments, Greek Ministry of Culture.

060 **(a)** 'Unfairly imprisoned: 29/VII-44, Katina, Maria' in K4. Photographer: Author. **(b)** 'Imprisoned 7 Dec 1943. I'm interrogated for our Greece. Maria P Konstantinidou. If I die, greetings to my mom' in 6 Merlin St Gestapo interrogation centre. Photographer: Voula Papaioanou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konstantinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. p. 233.

061 The Averof prison is a part of the detention network during the Occupation. ca 1941. Photographer: United Photojournalists Agency. Source: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive.

062 **(a)** The Block 15. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.haidari.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=215. Accessed: 27 October 2015. **(b)** A sketch of the Chaidari's concentration camp gate by F. Dimitriadis (1946). Source: Dimitriadis, F. (2004/1946). *Shadow over Athens: 77 Sketches from the Nazi Occupation* (L. Galati & M. Grammenou Eds.). Athens: Modern Times. p. 72.

063 **(a)** The Gestapo HQ in 6 Merlin St, ca 1941. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Available at: http://freeathens44.org/. Accessed: 18 October 2015. **(b)** The door of the interrogation centre, ca 1990. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Emiris, G. I. (Ed.). (2006). *Journey in Time and the City: 115 Years, Six Streets, Seven Buildings*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 126.

064 Writings on top of the 'calendar' read the sites where the inmate was held: Chaidari concentration camp; Merlin Street; detention centre at Sekeri Street. Photographer: Voula Papaioanou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konsatntinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. p. 230.

065 The writings mention all the spaces of confinement: Chaidari, Korai, Merlin and Averof. Photographer: Voula Papaioanou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konsatntinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. p. 232.

066 **(a)** 'Mavromatakis - Executed in the Basement' in Room III of K4. Photographer: Author. **(b)** 'Choupis Ioannis. 19 years old. 12 Vlafianou St. I'm executed 8-9-44. Long live the fatherland' in 6 Merlin St Gestapo interrogation centre. Photographer: Voula Papaioanou. Source: Liontis, K. (Ed.). (2005). *With Paint on the Wall*. Athens: Kathimerini/Epta Imeres. p. 12.

067 **(a)** A tiny depiction of a torched Athenian district in Room III-γ91. Photographer: Author. **(b)** 'Round-up in Drogouti' by Kostas Plakotaris (1942). Source: Baharian, A., & Antaios, P. (1995/1986). *Artistic Testimonies: Painting-Engraving in War, Occupation and Resistance* (3rd ed.). Athens: Odysseas. p. 108.

068 War imagery: airplanes bombarding and frigates fighting back. **(a)** Room V-β73. **(b)** Room V-γ17. Photographer: Author.

069 A horse depicted in Room IV-γ36. Photographer: Author.

070 Figures of beloved ones and scenes of the outside world on the walls. From left to right: In Room III-β56, V-a49 and V-γ19 respectively. Photographer: Author.

071 'I swear to Great God's name that I'm unfairly imprisoned due to a lie of a soldier. N.X.K 8-7-44' in Room V-α15. Photographer: Author.

072 **(a)** Sensual image consisting of nude male and female figures in Room VI-β48. **(b)** Nudity is insulting for some inmates and thus not tolerated. A censored vulgar image in Room VII-γ15. Photographer: Author.

073 Detainee Eleftherios Psounis from Kesariani district is brought in K4 on 29.4.1944 and is a characteristic example 'tagging' his name several times across different rooms. From left to right: in Rooms IV-β40, V-α68 and V-β72. Photographer: Author.

074 From left to right: Poem reads 'Don't cry, our lives are insignificant stories. Stop crying, we are just ephemeral dreams in the darkest night' in Room VII-γ19; human figures desperately asks for water in Room VII-β43; 'Chalari Brothers - Unjustly accused due to the betrayal of the Safi brothers - Society knows us, God will judge them - 9-7-44, Makrigiani District' and 'Andreas Mpoukos - Victim of the Safi brothers' write the betrayed detainees in Room V-b21. Photographer: Author.

075 'There no friends any more, and everyone forgets you' confesses detainee Karousos in his loneliness in Room V-α83. Photographer: Author.

076 Graffiti travelogues. From left to right: 'Mavrikios N. Malevris. Medicine Senior Student. Unjustly Imprisoned. Martyrdoms of the Holy Inquisition. Entry 15-12-42. Exit 10-1-43 via Averof [Prison]', 'Prokopiou Michael 18-7-43' in Room VI-α08; 'Anastasopoulos Kostantinos, Caught 26-4-44, at Skaramaka District, at Sapotas Street' in Room V-γ33. Photographer: Author.

077 **(a)** 'Alexandrakis Nikos - 2nd year Law student' in Room V-δ23. Photographer: Author. **(b)** A slogan at Zaimi St in Exarcheia district commemorating the assassinated law student M. Konstantinidis and asking for revenge. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1997/1973). *The Occupation* (3rd ed.). Athens: Ermis. p. 149.

078 In Room III-δ95 one can see shapes and lines that look like a kind of map of the detention centre. Did the inmates plan to escape? Photographer: Author.

079 K4 detainees are surrounded by bars. From left to right: The actual bars of the detention centre in Room IV-a48; even calendars looks like prison bars Room IV-β33; a prisoner asking for water depicted behind bars in Room VII-γ22. Photographer: Author.

080 'D. Moraitis, 24 hours without food and water. Just smelling jasmine' written twice in Room VII-γ23 and VII-γ46. Photographer: Author.

081 Olivia Pasquale, a detainee of Italian origin, exercises the Greek alphabet next to the Latin. Photographer: Author.

082 Detainees inscribe music notes in Room V-β52. Photographer: Author.

083 'Petros Poulidis, War Photojournalist, 14-7-1944' written in two different occasions in Room VI-α50 and VI-α70 respectively. Photographer: Author.

084 Days reduced to mere lines. The simplest and crudest technique possible used to count the days in custody in Room IV-β58. Photographer: Author.

085 Rena Papaspyrou. 'Image Through Matter' series (1982). Pencil on wall. Photographer: Rena Papaspyrou. Source: http://renapapaspyrou.gr/Home/Gallery/9. Accessed: 31 January 2015.

086 A typical part of K4's surfaces occupied by inscriptions of various styles and magnitudes. In Room V covering β32-γ33. Photographer: Author.

087 From left to right: Jean Dubuffet's lithographs 'The Wall [Le Mur]' (63.5x44.9cm) and 'Mystical Wall [Mur Mystique]' (63.5x45.2cm) both from the from 'Phenomena [Les Phénomènes]' series. Source: http://www.moma.org/collection/works/94630?locale=en. Accessed: 31 January 2015.

088 **(a)** Allies flags and wooden figures of Mussolini for sale in the streets of Athens. **(b)** Child wearing a National Youth Organization [Ethniki Organosis Neolaias] uniform, points at the wooden figure of Mussolini. ca 1941. Photographer: Voula Papaioannou. Source: Papaioannou, V. (2006). *The Photographer Voula Papaioannou: From the Photographic Archive of Benaki Museum* (F. Konsatntinou, J. Weber, S. Petsopoulos, Eds.). Athens: Benaki Museum. pp. 140, 141.

089 **(a)** A Mussolini portrait in Room V-β48 surrounded by (probably post-liberation) bullet holes. **(b)** Mussolini figure is pissed off in the sight of two lovers in Room VI-γ30. Photographer: Author.

090 **(a)** The K4 once completed in 1938. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Skiadas, E. (1997). *National Insurance Company, from 19th to 21st Century*. Athens: National Insurance Company. p. 88. **(b)** The Reichstag and the Berlin Wall soon after the German reunification in 1989, before Foster's restoration and the addition of the new glass and steel cupola. Photographer: Dennis Gilbert. Source: Baker, F. (2002). The Red Army Graffiti in the Reichstag, Berlin: Politics of Rock-Art in a Contemporary European Urban Landscape. In G. Nash & C. Chippindale (Eds.), *European Landscapes of Rock-Art* (pp. 20-38). London: Routledge. p. 29.

091 **(a)** Conserving the Reichstag graffiti during the Foster restoration. **(b)** Reichstag graffiti in East corridor written in Russian, with Cyrillic letters, making them undecipherable for any non-Russian speaker. Photographer: Rudi Meisel. Source: Foster, N., Baker, F., & Lipstadt, D. (2003). *The Reichstag Graffiti / Die Reichstag-Graffiti* (D. Jenkins Ed.). Berlin: Jovis. pp. 33, 32.

092 **(a)** Foster's 'censorship' or pictorial orchestration of Reichstag graffiti? East corridor, south end. **(b)** Norman Foster inspects the south-west stairwell of the Reichstag. Photographer: Rudi Meisel. Source: Foster, N., Baker, F., & Lipstadt, D. (2003). *The Reichstag Graffiti / Die Reichstag-Graffiti* (D. Jenkins Ed.). Berlin: Jovis. pp. 33, 69.

093 **(a)** A member of the preservation crew carefully restores the metallic doors in Room III. **(b)** Partially uncovered inscriptions in Room IV. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://korai4.gr/conservation/. Accessed: 11 November 2016.

094 'Switch off the light' emphatically written in Room VI-β82. Photographer: Author.

095 'Don't spit on the floor' with pencil in Room VI-a59. Photographer: Author.

096 'Georgios Karousos. Entry 8-4-44. Accused for stealing tires and bicycles of the Axis forces. Arrested by the Tsoliades [Greek collaborationist military groups]. Ah Vah. And I'm spending my Easter in these bars, in this wet grave. Resident of Metaxourgiou District. 47 Deligiorgi Street. Ah Vah. Karousos' in Room V-β83. Photographer: Author.

097 Detention happens with the slightest pretext and for petty crimes. Inmate Michalatos Gerasimos in Room VI-β63 warns us that 'It's easy to get in, but difficult to get out'. Photographer: Author.

CHAPTER 2

Cover 2 The Polytechnic gate after the uprising with the slogan 'Allende' occupying a prominent position. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 94.

098 Hand-written lyrics of the song 'The Street' ['O Dromos'] (1974) by Kostoula Mitropoulou. Photographer: Kostoula Mitropoulou. Source: http://www.e-orfeas.gr/artists/newartists/1878-article.html. Accessed: 14 March 2015.

099 The Minister of Education talks to students in an auditorium of the Athens Polytechnic. The slogan on the blackboard reads in bold 'Greece of Christian Greeks'. ca 02.1973. Source: Voulgaris, P. (1974). *The Chronicle of the Dictatorship, 1967-1974*. Athens: Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation, around 23'.

100 The interrogation centre at 18 Bouboulinas St. ca 1968. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Contemporary Social History Archives.

101 A door full of graffiti at the notorious detention centre at 18 Bouboulinas Street. Several names and dates appear together with a boldly written '114'. ca 1968. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Giourgos, K., Kampylis, T., & Becket, J. (2009). *The Terrace of Bouboulina: Suppression and Tortures in Greece '67-'69*. Athens: Potamos. p. 68.

102 Banner on a building at Omonoia Sq reading 'Democracy-114'. 2.11.1962. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Contemporary Social History Archives.

103 **(a)** Lambrakis Democratic Youth holding 114 placards during the July events in Panepistimiou Avenue on 3.9.1965. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Contemporary Social History Archives. **(a)** People with 114 placards during the July Events protest in Syntagma Square on 15.7.1965. Photographer: United Photojournalists Agency. Source: Katsigeras, M. (2001). *Greece in 20th Century: Photographs (B' 1946-2000)*. Athens: Potamos. p. 261.

104 114 written on the Greek flag at the University building on 4.9.1963. Photographer: Mimis Manolakos. Source: Contemporary Social History Archives.

105 The funeral of Sotiris Petroulas at Stadiou Street. On the Greek flag is written '114'.23.07.1965. Photographer: Jack Garofalo. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/166494602. Accessed: 26 August 2016.

106 Buses are used as barricades outside the Athens Polytechnic during the 1973 Uprising. **(a)** Slogans read: 'Strike', 'No', '114'. Photographer: Vasilis Karamanolis. Source: Manolis Ntaloukas' Archive of Antidictatorial Youth. **(b)** 'Down with Junta'. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). P*olytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 85.

107 Portraits of the Dictator and the Greek King for sale in an Athenian kiosk on 23.08.1969. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Georgios Mpakourou Private Collection.

108 Banners celebrating the 2nd anniversary of the Junta on the Bank of Greece HQ read 'Long Live the 21st of April'. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://rouvim.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/15.html. Accessed: 22 February 2014.

109 'Festivals of the Military Virtue of the Greeks' and other mass spectacles in the Panathenaic Stadium. **(a)** Celebrating the 1st anniversary of the Junta on 21.4.1968. Photographer: Athens News Agency. Source: Katsigeras, M. (2001). *Greece in 20th Century: Photographs (B' 1946-2000)*. Athens: Potamos. p. 317. **(b)** Kleio Denardou sings 'Where is your shadow God' during the 2nd Junta Olympiad on 26.8.1969. Photographer: Manolis Megalokonomou. Source: Manolis Ntaloukas' Archive of Antidictatorial Youth. **(c-d)** The date of the 'revolution' and several other national symbols enjoy special treatment in the festival happening on 30.8.1970. Photographers: **(c)** Aristotelis Sarrikostas; **(d)** Manolis Megalokonomou. Source: Karapanou, A. (Ed.). (2014). *Seven Years of Darkness: The Dictatorship of the Colonels, 1967-1974*. Athens: Greek Parliament. pp. 72, 89.

110 Models of submitted proposals for the 'Nation's Vow' architectural competition. Photographer: Nikos Tsikourias. Source: http://www.3137.gr/Nations-Vow-in-Urban-Design-Fantasy. Accessed: 12 April 2015.

111 The prelude of the Polytechnic Uprising. **(a)** Students at the terrace of the occupied School of Law. Photographer: Pan Delikaris. Source: Katsigeras, M. (2001). *Greece in 20th Century: Photographs (B' 1946-2000)*. Athens: Potamos. p. 334. **(b)** Placards and slogan read: 'Freedom' and 'Solidarity to students'. 21.2.1973. Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Karapanou, A. (Ed.). (2014). *Seven Years of Darkness: The Dictatorship of the Colonels, 1967-1974*. Athens: Greek Parliament. p. 100.

112 Students at the terrace of the School of Law holding placards that combined read: 'Freedom'. 21.2.1973. Photographer: Nikos Floros. Source: Giourgos, K. (Ed.). (1998). *Polytechnic: 25 Years Later*. Athens: Kathimerini/Epta Imeres. p. 15.

113 Student graffiting the Athens Polytechnic during the 1973 Uprising. The semi-completed slogan reads 'Free[dom]'. 16.11.1973. Source: Kaboukidis, K. (2002). *Polytechnic Testimonies*. Athens: Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation, around 5'.

114 The most iconic photograph of the 1973 Uprising. The graffiti on the wall reads 'Freedom'. 16.11.1973. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance*. Athens: Flippress. p. 39.

115 The Athens Polytechnic, after its brief settlement in Vlahoutsi's House, it moves in the brand new complex at Patision St in 1872. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Bires, K. (1957). *The History of the National Technical University of Athens: Until the Foundation of the Higher Education Schools*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. p. 49.

116 **(a)** West and east elevations of the Averof building as originally designed by the architect in 1862. **(b)** The monumental classic layout of the Athens Polytechnic complex as originally conceived by Kaftantzoglou. Source: Kalafati, E. (2007). *The Polytechnic Is Grateful: Benefactors and Donors of the National Technical University of Athens 1837-2000*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. pp. 140, 138.

117 The first extension (second construction phase, 1930-1935) as designed by architect Kostas Kitsikis. Source: Kalafati, E. (2007). *The Polytechnic Is Grateful: Benefactors and Donors of the National Technical University of Athens 1837-2000. Athens: National Technical University of Athens*. p. 245.

118 **(a)** Watercolour produced by Louisa Lantsa in 1885 showing the 'bright' Athens Polytechnic as it was implemented. Source: Kalafati, E. (2007). *The Polytechnic Is Grateful: Benefactors and Donors of the National Technical University of Athens 1837-2000*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens. pp. 144-145. **(b)** An aerial view of the Athens Polytechnic campus as is it stands today. Photographer: X. Patera's Collection. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (1999). Patision Street: Universities and Schools. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 15-18. p. 16.

119 Documenting the dramatic moments before the tank rams the Polytechnic gate on 17.11.1973. Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. p. 101.

120 Patisson St and its famous row of trees. ca 1910. Photographer: Antoni S. Mailli's Collection. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (1999). Patision Street: Universities and Schools. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 15-18. p. 2.

121 A map of 1875 Athens by Johann A. Kaupert showing the development of the city. On the north end dominates the newly completed Athens Polytechnic trilogy and the still under construction Archaeological Museum. Photographer: Heidelberg University Library. Source: http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/curtius1895a/0003. Accessed: 19 September 2016.

122 The imposing Archaeological Museum next to the Athens Polytechnic in 1906. Photographer: Benaki Museum Collection. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (1999). Patision Street: Universities and Schools. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 15-18. p. 9.

123 The emblematic Acropole Palace Hotel (left) at Patision St in1930. The most famous footages of the 1973 Uprising are captured from here due to the its placement directly opposite to the Polytechnic (right). Photographer: N. Politis Collection. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (1999). Patision Street: Universities and Schools. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 15-18. p. 13.

124 Patisson St accumulates several educational institutions contributing to its politicization. Here the Athens University of Economics and Business in 1935. Photographer: Antoni S. Mailli's Collection. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (1999). Patision Street: Universities and Schools. *Kathimerini/Epta Imeres, 31*(2), 15-18. p. 18.

125 The Police HQ next to the Athens Polytechnic damaged during the 1944 December Events. ca 01.1945. Photographer: Petros Poulidis. Source: Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation Archive.

126 **(a)** The 1973 peace sign (10.α). Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 95. **(b)** The 2015 anarchist symbol (01.b) occupying the same surface of the Athens Polytechnic. Photographer: Author.

127 Is fascism still lingering? **(a)** 'Death to fascism' (06.β) written during the 1973 Uprising. Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. p. 150. **(b)** 'Fascists we'll hung you' (07.b) on the AP in 2015. Photographer: Author.

128 The allies have become the enemies. **(a)** Slogan on the AP in liberated Athens reads 'Welcome our friends. A grateful Greece will keep the peace in the Balkans' (00.0) ca 10.1944. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1983). *The Liberation*. Athens: Ermis. p. 78. **(b)** 'USA Out' (11.0) written on the Polytechnic gate. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Manolis Ntaloukas' Archive of Antidictatorial Youth. **(c)** 'Down with CIA' (02.β) graffitied during the 1973 Uprising. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 49.

129 Private notes and information circulated in the AP during the Uprising. **(a)** 'WC on the level of the Architecture School' (05.α). Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. p. 122. **(b)** 'The full glasses are in case water supply is cut' (39.β). Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 43.

130 On the west façades - the most visible ones from the Patision St - the slogans intensify in terms of content and size. The graffiti on the diametrically positioned Arts School and Rectory building of the Athens Polytechnic evince this trend. **(a)** 'Down with Junta', 'Bread - Education - Freedom', 'Proletariat in the Street', 'Laocracy - Freedom' (03.0). Photographer: Zisis Aggelopoulos. Source: Nikolaos Tolis Photographic Collection. **(b)** 'Freedom', 'Workers - Farmers - Students in Struggle', 'Down with Junta' (15.0). Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 37.

131 Buses passing in front of the Polytechnic serve as disseminators of the uprising. **(a)** Student completes a slogan reading 'Down with Junta'. Photographer: Vasilis

Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). P*olytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 27. **(b)** Banner on moving trolley reads 'Take the monkey and get out of here'. Photographer: Unknown. Source: Manolis Ntaloukas' Archive of Antidictatorial Youth.

132 The Polytechnic radio station broadcasting the uprising. The placard reads 'Colleagues do not destroy equipment and furniture'. Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. p. 38.

133 The Polytechnic gate during and after the 1973 Uprising. **(a)** The gate full of people and graffiti. Photographer: Pavlos Anagnostopoulos. Source: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-5DbZLPeDu2Q/VeaxAFtQoZI/AAAAAAAA2yo/G-68x6orwws/s1600/20111117-POLYTECHNEIO_3.jpg. Accessed: 11 April 2016. **(b)** The rammed gate empty of people and full of wreckage. Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. p. 114.

134 **(a)** The west façade of the Rectory building during the Polytechnic Uprising when it is full of graffiti. **(b)** The same surface clean a few hours after the gory repression (18.0). Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. pp. 52, 94.

135 'Long live the proletariat' becomes 'Long live the nation' (17.0). Photographer: Unknown. Source: Mpostantzoglou, D. (2002). Polytechnic 1973: For the First Time in Greece Unpublished Photographs after the Intrusion of the Tank. *Metro Magazine*, 28-37. p. 29.

136 'The Junta will fall from the people. Bread, Education, Freedom' written in the atrium of the Polytechnic on 15.11.1973. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 46.

137 **(a)** Slogans written on a blackboard of the occupied Sorbonne University on 13.05.1968. Photographer: Guy Le Querrec. Source: http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZOLQLWLUF7&SMLS=1&RW=1366&RH=659. Accessed: 28 November 2015. **(b)** Slogans on a blackboard of the occupied Athens Polytechnic on 16.11.1973. (40.0). Photographer: Vasilis Karamanolis. Source: Manolis Ntaloukas' Archive of Antidictatorial Youth.

138 **(a)** Slogan in Parisian streets reads 'estudiants solidaires des travailleurs' [students solidarity to workers] during May 1968. Photographer: Bruno Barbey. Source: http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZOLQLW7DPW&SMLS=1&RW=1366&RH=659. Accessed: 28 November 2015. **(b)** Slogans in the Athens Polytechnic read 'Workers-Farmers-Students, Capital Down, General Strike', 'Long Live the Working Class' (41.0). Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 48.

139 **(a)** Parisian slogan written on 03.05.1968 reads 'Soyez realistes, demandez l'impossible' [Be realists, ask the impossible]. Photographer: Gerard Aime. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/480831863. Accessed: 28 November 2015. **(b)** Slogan on the Averof building written during the Polytechnic Uprising reads 'Death to realism' (04.α). Photographer: Aristotelis Sarrikostas. Source: Fatsis, Y. (1974). *Fascism Dies Today. Athens Polytechnic: From the Occupation to the Intrusion*. Athens: Ermeias. p. 150.

140 **(a)** The Polytechnic gate after the uprising (14.0) with the slogan 'Allende' occupying a prominent position. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 94. **(b)** A crowd of people marching to support the election of Salvador Allende for president in Santiago, Chile. Photographer: James N. Wallace. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidency_of_Salvador_Allende#/media/File:Allende_supporters.jpg. Accessed: 28 November 2015.

141 Little Prince paying homage to the gate of the Polytechnic. The represented graffiti read the iconic 'Allende' and 'Down with Junta'. Illustrator: Michael Kountouris. Source: Nisides Magazine, *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, 17.11.2012.

142 **(a)** Students upraise at the Polytechnic gate. The placards read 'Thailand and 'Death to Fascism'. Photographer: Vasilis Karamanolis. Source: Manolis Ntaloukas' Archive of Antidictatorial Youth. **(b)** A graffitied bus is hijacked by revolting students during the 1973 October Uprising in Thailand's capital Bangkok. Photographer: Phatarawadee Phataranawik. Source: http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/life/art_culture/30216933. Accessed: 28 November 2015.

143 Slogan on the Polytechnic welcomes the Allies in liberated Athens (0.0): 'Welcome our friends. A grateful Greece will keep the peace in the Balkans'. ca 10.1944. Photographer: Kostas Paraschou. Source: Paraschou, K. (1983). *The Liberation*. Athens: Ermis. p. 78.

144 The day after the Polytechnic Uprising (14.0). Slogans on the gate read: 'Down with Junta', 'Allende', 'The students are with you'; 'Night of 15th to 16th November 1973'. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 94.

145 Chemicals removing the 'Athens Guernica' (4.0) from the Polytechnic on 16.03.2015. Photographer: Nick Paleologos. Source: http://www.lifo.gr/team/u51848/56128. Accessed: 18 March 2015.

146 The smashed gate after the intrusion of the tank in the AP. Police cleans the traces of the Uprising. Photographer: Vasilis Karageorgos. Source: Karageorgos, V. (2013). *Polytechnic 1973: 40 Years of Distance* (T. Alatas Ed.). Athens: Flippress. p. 88.

147 The monumental 'Athens Guernica' graffiti on 03.03.2015. Over a night three local graffitists managed to cover the whole Rector's building. Photographer: Myrto Tsilimpounidi. Source: Courtesy of the photographer.

148 The buffing crew cleans only the walls leaving traces of the Guernica behind. 24.05.2015. Photographer: Author.

149 Days after the removal of the 'Athens Guernica', a piece with similar aesthetics appears in Patision Street. Photographer: Author.

150 People protesting against the removal of the Athens Guernica graffiti on 16.03.2015. Photographer: Nick Paleologos. Source: https://www.kar.org.gr/2015/03/16/διαμαρτυρία-για-να-μην-σβηστεί-το-graffiti-στ/. Accessed: 18 March 2015.

CHAPTER 3

Cover 3 The Bank of Greece's epigraph is stained with red paint thrown by demonstrators. Photographer: John Kolesidis. Source: http://pictures.reuters.com/archive/GREECE-UNEMPLOYMENT---GM1E7981UCJ01.html. Accessed: 23 January 2013.

151 The spot where Alexandros Grigoropoulos was assassinated. The toponymic sign of Tzavella St was replaced with one bearing the name of the boy. 12.2008. Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Greek_riots. Accessed: 18 December 2012.

152 Polemic imagery dominates the visual sphere during and immediately after the 2008 December Uprising. **(a)** Riot policeman points with gun protesters marching in Syntagma Sq after the assassination of Grigoropoulos. Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://libcom.org/library/greek-riot-eyewitness-reports-10-december-2008. Accessed: 18 December 2012. **(b)** A protester threatens a riot policeman with a water pistol during a mass demonstration in front of the police headquarters in Athens. 12.2008. Photographer: Olivier Laban-Mattei. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/92907908. Accessed: 3 March 2014.

153 Stencil adapting the motto of the film V for Vendetta to Grigoropoulos assassination date. 12.2008. Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://68.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lvr31kBaCG1qhopbeo1_400.jpg. Accessed: Accessed: 3 March 2014.

154 Stencil that proliferated on the walls of Athens depicting Alexandros Grigoropoulos. 12.2008. Photographer: Olivier Laban-Mattei. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/84082725. Accessed: 3 March 2014.

155 'No Control' and 'Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear' written on the University building during the 2008 Youth Uprising. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.incinerrante.com/texts/merry-crisis-and-happy-new-fear-a-collection-of-pictures#axzz465RGUnZn. Accessed: 3 March 2014.

156 The Christmas Tree in Syntagma Square on fire. 08.12.2008. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/133564/χριστούγεννα-στην-αθήνα-από-το-ψηλότερο-δέντρο-στην-ευρώπη-και-τα-90000-λαμπιόνια-στο-πυ. Accessed: 4 February 2013.

157 PM George Papandreou addresses the nation from the picturesque waterfront of the remote Kastelorizo island. 23.04.2010. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.thetoc.gr/images/articles/3/article_103591/diaggelma-papandreou-kastelorizo_3.w_hr.cropped.jpg. Accessed: 20 October 2014.

158 Crisis turns to spectacle. Extensive coverage of the Greek crisis and Greek rioting from the foreign media at Syntagma Sq. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.kathimerini.gr/824908/article/politismos/eikastika/o-epi8etikos-realismos-twn-eikonwn-ths-a8hnas. Accessed: 26 August 2016.

159 A bank branch is torched during a riotous protest in 05.05.2010, a few days after PM Papandreou asks IMF rescue. Three bank employees die in the fire. Photographer: Menelaos Myrillas. Source: http://www.thetoc.gr/koinwnia/article/oloi-ksexasame-tous-nekrous-tis-marfin. Accessed: 15 June 2015.

160 Syntagma Square on 05.05.2010. **(a)** Riot policeman hurls projectiles at protesters. Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://roarmag.org/essays/the-battle-for-syntagma-an-eyewitness-report/. Accessed: 8 May 2012. **(b)** Demonstrator cast stones at police. Photographer: Pascal Rossignol. Source: http://www.globalpost.com/article/5549104/2010/05/07/top-10-photos-eurozone-debt-crisis. Accessed: 8 May 2012.

161 The piece 'Welcome to Athens' by street artist WD in Exarchia district welcomes the visitors of the city with flames, petrol bombs and aggressive images. Photographer: Author.

162 Stencil at Vlahava St by street artist Paul that partially reproduces the suicide note of unionist Savvas Metikidis, who committed a politically motivated suicide on 21.4.2012. Photographer: Author.

163 A piece by street artist Bleeps is symbolically placed on the abandoned building of the Social Insurance Institute at Piraeus St shows a man on crutches and reads '& health kaput', referring to the cuts and reforms in the Greek NHS. Photographer: Bleeps. Source: Courtesy of the photographer.

164 Street artist highlights the damages caused on the marble cladding of a building after the February 2012 mass protest in Athens. Photographer: Author.

165 The reversed 'Praying Hands' commissioned public intervention by Pavlos Tsakonas at 20 Piraeus St. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.ypeka.gr/Default.aspx?tabid=362&sni[524]=1309&language=el-GR. Accessed: 18 September 2014.

166 The 'No Signal' commissioned public intervention by Panos Sklavenitis at 6 Kriezotou St. Photographer: Author.

167 The 'Skein of Life' commissioned public intervention by Anastasia Kouvari at 4 Freiderikou Smith St. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.kretsis.gr/site/wallpainting/murals.html. Accessed: 18 September 2014.

168 **(a)** Greek Touristic campaign motto in 2006 reads 'Live Your Myth in Greece'. Source: http://www.adforum.com/creative-work/ad/player/6685527/mermaid/greece-national-tourism-organisation. **(b)** The 2012 one reads 'Greece: All Time Classic'. Source: http://gnto.gov.gr/sites/default/files/files_article/GS.pdf. Accessed: 18 April 2013.

169 A graffito on a bank branch at Syntagma Sq written on 19.10.2011 reads 'Live your Greece in myth' mocking the famous Greek Tourism motto 'Live your myth in Greece'. Photographer: Aris Messinis. Source: http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-697568. 21 October 2013.

170 **(a)** Installation of the 'Rethink Athens' logo in front of the University of Athens. Photographer: Author. **(b)** The winning proposal by Dutch architecture firm Okra. The view depicts the Bank of Greece and the Athens Trilogy. Source: http://gbtimes.com/life/athens-rethinks-its-future. 8 March 2015.

171 Stencil at Panepistimiou Ave depicts Professor Tournikiotis mocking his involvement in the Rethink Athens competition. 05.2012. Photographer: Author.

172 **(a)** A poster advertising the 'Cleaning Parade' of Atenistas. Source: http://www.atenistas.gr/?p=1663. **(b)** Atenistas' members cleaning Panepistimiou Avenue on 05.12.2010. Photographer: Giorgos Panagakis. Source: http://www.demotix.com/photo/528106/greek-activists-atenistas-clean-athens-streets. Accessed: 22 December 2012.

173 **(a)** 'Clean walls, dirty consciousness' written on Marasli staircase in 2012. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://synthimata-se-toixous.blogspot.co.uk/p/toixos.html. **(b)** Residents sue Atenistas for their rainbow-like intervention at Marasli staircase in November 2013. Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://atenistas.org/2013/11/19/marasli/. Accessed: 18 May 2017.

174 A member of Atenistas yarn 'bombs' the trees outside of the Old Parliament on 22.12.2013. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/136023/ξαφνικά-τα-δέντρα-και-τα-παγκάκια-στο-κέντρο-της-αθήνας-«ντύθηκαν»-με-μάλλινα-και-έγιναν. Accessed: 17 May 2017.

175 The SynAthina headquarters on Athinas Street with its freshly painted graffito on 11.10.2013. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.tff.gr/article.asp?catid=36793&subid=2&pubid=129515897. Accessed: 2 March 2014.

176 Junction of Aiolou and Stadiou Streets. **(a)** The omnipresent 'Vasanizomai' ['I Suffer'] slogan emphatically written on one of the blind façades. Photographer: Author. (2013). Photographer: Author. **(b)** The proposed intervention 'Expelled From Eden' by Manolis Anastasakos (2014). Source: http://www.lifo.gr/team/u41183/46627. Accessed: 20 November 2015.

177 Athens Deputy Mayor for Sanitation Andreas Varelas, together with BBC journalist Rajan Datar, clean the graffiti of Ermou Street. ca 08.2012. Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/fast_track/9744948.stm. Accessed: 20 March 2014.

178 '[Mayor] Kaminis, Not a Single Wall Will Left Unpainted :)'. Athinas Street on 08.09.2013. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://news247.gr/eidiseis/koinonia/polemos-dhmoy-athhnaiwn-me-omades-gkrafiti-kaminh-kanenas-toixos-den-tha-meinei.2404298.html. Accessed: 2 December 2013.

179 The 'laundry' anti-fascist event. Slogan written on the 'laundry' fountain in Syntagma Square reads 'This is how you clean a place'. 22.03.2014. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.diaforetiko.gr/gemise-me-sapoynades-to-sydagma-afrise-to-sintrivani-vinteo/. Accessed: 24 March 2014.

180 Volunteer removes graffiti from a Pireaus Bank branch in Stadiou Street. ca 08.2013. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.koolnews.gr/ellada/epiteloys-kathari-athina-ethelontes-kai-dimos-katharizoyn-tin-poli-eikones#241022/241025. Accessed: 9 September 2013.

181 The digital collage 'Hephaestus Temple Graffitied' by artist François Beaurain in 2014. Source: http://www.fbeaurain.com/Athens.html. Accessed: 28 October 2015.

182 A member of the Athens Alternative Tours team (ATA) showing the graffiti 'beauties' of Athens to tourists. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.atathens.org/tours_streetart1-en.html. Accessed: 18 April 2015.

183 STACO member restores paste up by street artist Zamie in Psyrri district, in Athens centre. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://streetartconservators.blogspot.co.uk/. Accessed: 18 April 2015.

184 'Athens is the New Berlin' in Stadiou Street by street artist Cacao Rocks in 2017. Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/860815098. Accessed: 28 November 2017.

185 The 'No Respect' exhibition opening at the Onassis Cultural Centre on 11.04.2014. Photographer: Spyros Staveris. Source: http://www.lifo.gr/team/omorfia/47771. Accessed: 20 April 2014.

186 'Old Man, Where Are You Going With Your Horse? Curfew is in Operation' written on the Bank of Greece HQ on 11.04.2014. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.newsbeast.gr/greece/arthro/666445/gero-pou-pas/. Accessed: 15 November 2015.

187 'IMF Out - Theodoris' written o Theodoros Kolokotronis statue at Stadiou Street opposite to the Bank of Greece on 11.04.2014. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.lifo.gr/team/u41183/60653. Accessed: 15 November 2015.

188 Dictating the form. The first page of the architectural competition call asks architects to pay attention to the 'monumental character' and 'classic Greek style' of the project. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings*. Athens: Bank of Greece. p. 108.

189 Two competition entries. **(a)** Proposal by famous architect Ioannnis Despotopoulos. **(b)** A 'classical Greek' proposal by an unidentified architect (nickname 'Sfaira'). Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings*. Athens: Bank of Greece. p. 111.

190 BoG's architects are particularly interested in the way that the main (east) façade of the building looks like and give special attention to the design of its portico. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings*. Athens: Bank of Greece. pp. 122, 130.

191 **(a)** The main (west) façade of the Greek Parliament at Vasillisis Amalias Avenue. Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://www.euractiv.com/section/euro-finance/news/greek-parliament-decides-on-grexit-tonight/. Accessed: 1 November 2016. **(b)** The imitation of power. The main (east) façade of the BoG at Panepistimiou Avenue. Photographer: Yioryis Yerolimpos. Source: Kardamitsi-Adami, M. (2011). *Bank of Greece: The Buildings*. Athens: Bank of Greece. p. 147.

192 The function and form of particular buildings seem to make them prone to graffiti. The the neoclassical HQ building of the Panhellenic Unionists Organisation (GSEE) defaced. ca 12.2010. Photographer: Orestis Panagiotou. Source: http://

www.naftemporiki.gr/photos/457074/agnostoi-petaksan-mauri-kai-kokkini-mpogia-sto-ktirio-tis-gsee-/. Accessed: 12 February 2013.

193 The well-known ancient stone quarry in Pireaus. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://pireorama.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post_20.html. Accessed: 12 June 2016.

194 The famous ancient marble quarry of Mt Pentelicus. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.oryktosploutos.net/2011/04/blog-post_15.html. Accessed: 12 June 2016.

195 Writing on the noblest of materials. 'Resist' on the Academy of Athens building (part of the neoclassical trilogy) in 2011. Photographer: Myrto Tsilimpounidi. Source: Courtesy of the photographer.

196 Athenian Trilogy's buildings are prone to graffiti. 'Fascism won't save you!', 'When peaceful revolution becomes impossible, then violence becomes Necessity' written on the Academy building. ca 11.2013. Photographer: Glorianna Picini. Source: http://www.gloriannapiciniphotography.com/. Accessed: 3 July 2015.

197 The Council of State building defaced during the 2008 Youth Uprising. Photographer: Lapost. Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/lapost/3101966587/sizes/o/in/photostream/. Accessed: 6 March 2013.

198 The Greek Morgage Bank (former Bank of Greece headquarters) fully covered with graffiti. ca 01.2013. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.epocalibera.com/2013/01/public-transport-workers-strike-athens.html. Accessed: 9 February 2015.

199 Banks and banking system are the literal and metaphorical targets of many graffiti in the Athens of crisis. **(a)** #E02 'Death to Bankers' (Iδ14-ζ16). Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://athens.indymedia.org/post/1374159/. Accessed: 23 August 2013. **(b)** #F04 'Burn the Banks' (Iδ18-ζ20). Photographer: Oli Scarff. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/139311325. Accessed: 9 December 2013.

200 When money becomes the issue, then the most probable target is a bank. The meaning of slogans depends on their contexts. **(a)** #B02 'There is money' (I-δ18-ζ20). Photographer: Kostas Tsironis. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/129728676. Accessed: 9 September 2013. **(b)** #F05 'Rob to have money' (I-δ14-ζ16). Photographer: Stathis Kallegeris. Source: http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/eu-purse-stays-shut-till-athens-proves-fit/news-story/12624cd10bc4d6b2906747717fa84091. Accessed: 31 July 2013.

201 Questioning the authority of the bank. Specific marks owe their meanings to their placement on the surface. **(a)** #K01 '[Bank of Greece]?' (I-δ14-ζ16). Photographer: Kostas Tsironis. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/125622681. Accessed: 28 October 2015. **(b)** #B03 'Whores-> [Banque De Grece]?' (I-δ22-ζ24). Photographer: Kostas Tsironis. Source: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picture-galleries/worldnews/8839511/Greece-crisis-a-second-day-of-riots-in-Athens.html?image=18. Accessed: 12 September 2013.

202 The symbolic meaning of particular graffiti gestures. Here #C03-#C05 consist of red paint symbolising the blood of Alexandros Grigoropoulos (I-γ14-ε16). Photographer: Aris Messinis. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/107350316. Accessed: 2 September 2014.

203 Commemorative graffiti on 6.12.2010. **(a)** #C01 'Alex e vivo' (Iδ22-ζ24). Photographer: Nikolas Georgiou. Source: http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/42-40665341/young-people-protest-in-athens-in-memory. Accessed: 6 December 2014. **(b)** #C02 reproduces the iconic slogan 'Merry crisis and a happy new fear' (I-ε27-η31). Photographer: Kostas Kallergis. Source: https://whenthecrisishitthefan.wordpress.com/2011/12/23/merry-crisis/. Accessed: 12 March 2013.

204 Graffiti often reflect the topicality of their production. The #L01 (I-δ14-ζ16) stencil invites passers-by to vote 'No' to the referendum on 5.7.2015. Photographer: Christopher Furlong. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/479285980. Accessed: 5 July 2015.

205 The meaning of certain writings derives from their spatio-temporal position. **(a)** #K02 'Old man, where are you going with the horse? A curfew is in place' on 11.04.2014 (II-γ34-ε36). Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.news-beast.gr/greece/arthro/666445/gero-pou-pas/. Accessed: 15 November 2015. **(b)** #F14 'Reserve MAT and haircut DIAS' on 12.2.2012 (I-ε08-η12). Photographer: Unknown. Source: https://athens.indymedia.org/post/1376633/. Accessed: 28 September 2013.

206 The spatial and temporal placement of #G02 is exemplar (I-δ22-ζ24). The strike-through in this particular place transforms the 'Banque De Grece' epigraph into 'Banque de Merkel'. The date chosen, i.e. 26.09.2012, is few days before Chancellor Angela Merkel visits Athens. Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis. Source: http://business.financialpost.com/news/economy/hostile-greeks-brace-for-merkels-visit/wcm/44f44d60-78d0-4bcb-ae94-9bc6c828171a. Accessed: 28 January 2014.

207 #G02, similarly to every other graffito, makes different sense when examined together with the rest writings with which it temporarily coexisted. **(a)** #G01 'The thieves are here' (I-δ14-ζ16). Photographer: Milos Bicanski. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/100013532. Accessed: 30 September 2013. **(b)** #G04 'Banque de Grece' Berlin (II-γ19-ε21). Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis. Source: http://photos.oregonlive.com/photo-essay/2012/02/thousands_riot_as_greece_appro.html. Accessed: 4 June 2013.

208 #G02 interacts with #G03 reading 'Their riches, our blood' (I-δ22-ζ24), further complicating our reading. Photographer: Louisa Gouliamaki. Source: http://www.sfgate.com/news/slideshow/World-in-Focus-49775/photo-3515185.php. Accessed: 26 January 2014.

209 The photographic frame depicting the riot policeman, infuses more ambiguity and complexity to the graffiti and its understanding. Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis. Source: http://business.financialpost.com/news/economy/hostile-greeks-brace-for-merkels-visit/wcm/44f44d60-78d0-4bcb-ae94-9bc6c828171a. Accessed: 28 January 2014.

210 Some graffiti reflect the exact moment of their production. Below a series of images capture the graffitist of #M01 writing 'Burn it' (I-δ22 - ζ24) while the BoG building is being torched during a march on 12.11.2015. Photographer: Kostas Tsironis. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/496815494. Accessed: 12 March 2016.

211 A graffitist caught writing the #F03 slogan (I-δ14-ζ16) on 12.02.2012 whilst concealing his identity with a hat and hoodie. Photographer: Milos Bicanski. Source: http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2012/02/10/146694810/stocks-take-dive-as-greek-bailout-deal-remains-uncertain. Accessed: 26 January 2014.

212 Graffitist almost touches the BoG surface to write the #A02 slogan (I-δ15-ζ17) during a demonstration on 05.05.2010. Photographer: Federico Verani. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/157261166. Accessed: 9 May 2013.

213 A graffitist executing hastily the #I05 graffiti (I-δ22-ζ24) on 24.11.2012. Photographer: Mary Tzempelikou. Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/mtzempelikou/3623364076/in/photostream/. Accessed: 22 February 2014.

214 A worker with clinical outfit removes the #J01 graffito (II-γ19-ε21) from the BoG epigraph on 20.02.2013. Photographer: Simon Dawson. Source: http://business.financialpost.com/news/economy/greeks-still-to-convince-eu-on-bailout-commitments/wcm/fbd05a03-9cc7-4737-b3b7-799ca4b3e94c. Accessed: 18 September 2015.

215 By repeating the same circular gesture over a small space, a worker removes the #D01 - #D05 graffiti (I-δ14-ζ16) from the BoG epigraph on 15.09.2011. Photographer: Milos Bicanski. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/125056334. Accessed: 19 March 2013.

216 A maintenance worker scrubs #I01 (I-δ14-ζ16) graffiti from the BoG epigraph on 26.11.2012. Photographer: Thanassis Stavrakis. Source: http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/APTOPIX-Greece-Financial-Crisis/4449c2f1ab7c4aca849dc97a41815c0f/193/0. Accessed: 3 November 2014.

217 The marble epigraph of the Bank of Greece. Photographer: Author.

218 The marble of the BoG in microscopic view (x20). Source: Moropoulou, A., et al (2002). Evaluation of Cleaning Procedures on the Facades of the Bank of Greece Historical Building in the Center of Athens. *Building and Environment, 37*(7), 753–760. p. 754.

219 The face of Rigas Feraios' statue sitting in front of the University building is defaced during the 2008 Youth Uprising. Photographer: Unknown. Source: http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/2011/12/06/three-years-since-the-greek-insurrection/. Accessed: 18 October 2013.

220 The portico of the BoG on Panepistimiou Ave is the place where all the symbolic features of the building are concentrated. Worth noting are the three epigraphs: two small ones the side walls and one on the top. Photographer: Author.

221 The most writings are concentrated on the marble clad portico of the BoG. Its most frequently targeted features are the epigraphs. Workers removing graffiti from: **(a)** The left (in English) epigraph on 13.02.2012. Photographer: Yiorgos Karahalis. Source: http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/14/us-greece-idUSTRE8120HI20120214. Accessed: 22 October 2014. **(b)** Top (in Greek) epigraph on 15.09.2011. Photographer: Angelos Tzortzinis. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/125672527. Accessed: 19 September 2013. **(c)** The right (in French) epigraph on 07.07.2015. Photographer: Kostas Tsironis. Source: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/468908428. Accessed: 3 February 2016.

222 The mediatised physical surface is transformed into a hypersurface. Graffitists attempt to give to their anticipated global audience some sort of context. Defacing the BoG epigraph serves this cause. Photographer: Orestis Panagiotou. Source: http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/analysis-of-hidden-risks-in-central-bank-accounts-a-823872.html. Accessed: 28 January 2013.

CHAPTER 4

Cover 4 Mixed media piece 'Faμe' by artist Nar in the 'No Respect' Exhibition, Onassis Cultural Centre. 04.2014. Photographer: Author.

CHAPTER 5

Cover 5 An image from by bookshelf showing a series of indicative sources used in the thesis. Photographer: Author.

CHAPTER 6

Cover 6 The book covers of the published articles and book chapters presented here. Photographer: Author.

Drawing 0.2.2 The plan and section of the OCC which appear on the cover of the drawing is by Architecture Studio. Source: http://domesindex.com/buildings/stegh-grammatwn-kai-texnwn-idrymatos-wnash/. Accessed: 11 May 2017.


zero books
MYRTO TSILIMPOUNIDI & AYLWYN WALSH
REMAPPING 'CRISIS'
A GUIDE TO ATHENS
ΜΕΤΑ
b. - Alexandros Vasmoulakis
Andreas Fakis
Konstantina Drakopoulou
Konstantinos Avramidis
Anna Krinaki
No Respect
Texts
Κείμενα
Exhibition
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Artists
Καλλιτέχνες
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Petar Jandrić
Damir Boras Editors
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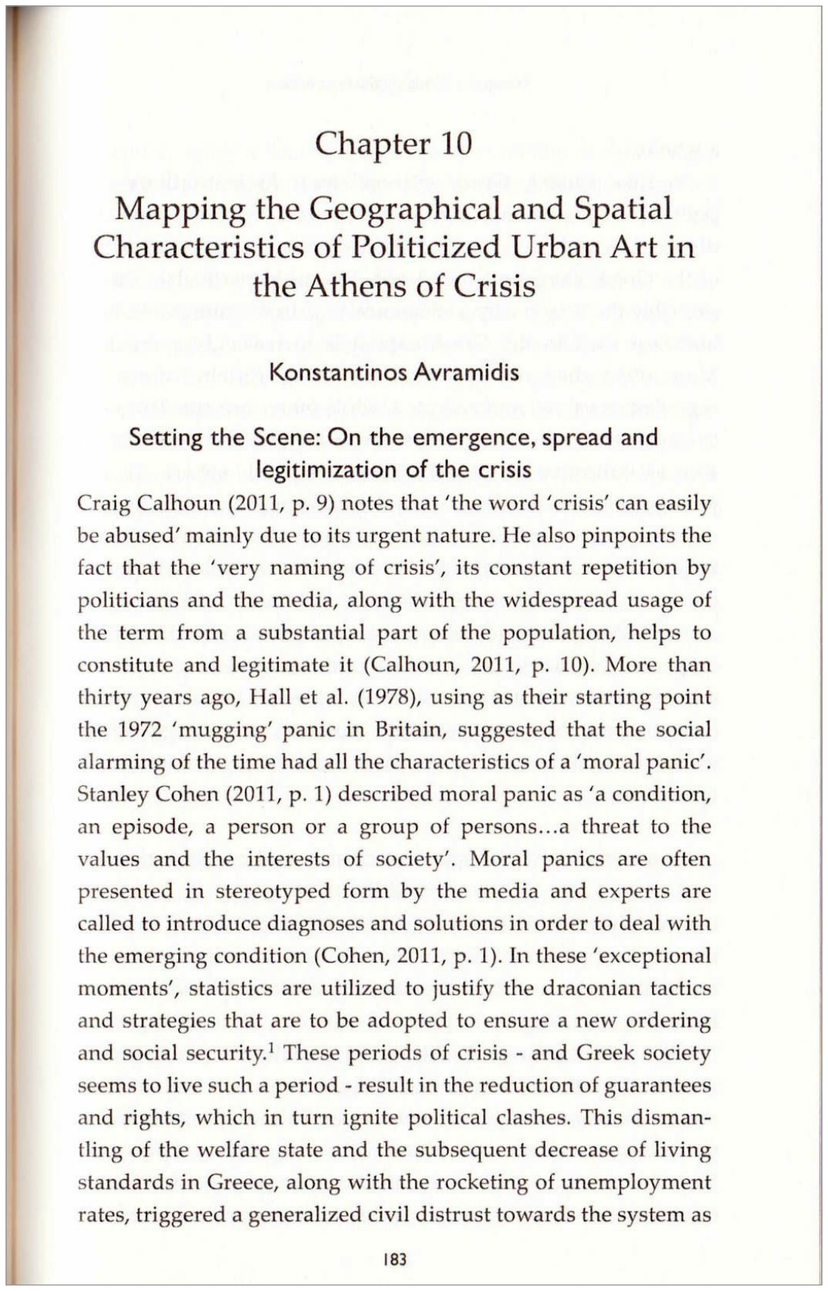
BAЉKAN
Special Issue - Visual Communication Design In the Balkans
Guest edited by Jilly Traganou and Artemis Yagou
Graffiti and Street Art
Reading, Writing and Representing the City
Edited by
Konstantinos Avramidis
and Myrto Tsilimpounidi

6.1. Published I

The book chapter entitled *Mapping the Geographical and Spatial Characteristics of Politicized Urban Art in the Athens of Crisis* was published in the volume *Remapping 'Crisis': A Guide to Athens* (2014) edited by visual sociologist Myrto Tsilimpounidi and performance studies scholar Aylwyn Walsh. The aim of the book is to map the ways in which various responses to the crisis are expressed in the urban and spatial context of Athens. My work sits in one of the four sections of the collection which is specifically dedicated to graffiti.

The chapter focuses on the geographical and spatial expression of politicized graffiti in crisis-ridden Athens. Based primarily on Kurt Iveson's work on publics and the city (2007), the essay explores the forms through which crisis is reflected and circulated on the walls of Athens whilst allowing wall writers to invent a 'public' that runs counter to the dominant public sphere. The chapter also attempts to identify relationships between graffiti and the contexts in which they appear. It argues that particular spaces seem to become graffiti targets in specific moments due to their function, appearance and placement in the urban fabric. In turn, the sitting of the writings in these particular surfaces further charges their (political) meaning. These initial observations regarding the relationship of particular edifices with specific kinds of graffiti writings in the crisis era, led me further investigate this matter and focus on the 'cathedral' of the financial crisis, i.e. the neoclassical Bank of Greece building.



Chapter 10

Mapping the Geographical and Spatial Characteristics of Politicized Urban Art in the Athens of Crisis

Konstantinos Avramidis

Setting the Scene: On the emergence, spread and legitimization of the crisis

Craig Calhoun (2011, p. 9) notes that 'the word 'crisis' can easily be abused' mainly due to its urgent nature. He also pinpoints the fact that the 'very naming of crisis', its constant repetition by politicians and the media, along with the widespread usage of the term from a substantial part of the population, helps to constitute and legitimate it (Calhoun, 2011, p. 10). More than thirty years ago, Hall et al. (1978), using as their starting point the 1972 'mugging' panic in Britain, suggested that the social alarming of the time had all the characteristics of a 'moral panic'. Stanley Cohen (2011, p. 1) described moral panic as 'a condition, an episode, a person or a group of persons…a threat to the values and the interests of society'. Moral panics are often presented in stereotyped form by the media and experts are called to introduce diagnoses and solutions in order to deal with the emerging condition (Cohen, 2011, p. 1). In these 'exceptional moments', statistics are utilized to justify the draconian tactics and strategies that are to be adopted to ensure a new ordering and social security.[1] These periods of crisis - and Greek society seems to live such a period - result in the reduction of guarantees and rights, which in turn ignite political clashes. This dismantling of the welfare state and the subsequent decrease of living standards in Greece, along with the rocketing of unemployment rates, triggered a generalized civil distrust towards the system as

a whole.

In this context, Greek citizens' trust in institutions and political system is depleted. This distrust manifests as civil disobedience which is interpreted by dominant groups as hurtful of the Greek image in general and Athens' in particular. This is probably the reason why a 'clearance' (e.g. from immigrants, new homeless etc.) in the Greek capital is increasingly promoted. More often than not, during such times, certain voices are regarded as valued and accepted, while others are not. This civil exclusion from the dialogue that forms the public agenda can be seen as indicative of the delimitation of public sphere. This is perhaps why the process of both transmitting some information and suppressing certain others, may take a violent form within a time of crisis (Avramidis, 2012), while the control over public discourse has increasingly become the bone of contention amongst dominant and subordinate groups. Amidst this politically unstable condition, which is underlined by two elections within one month (May-June 2012), citizens, being unable to comment on this unprecedented situation, are struggling to locate - or even to construct - spaces that will allow their voices to be heard.

In search for social space: exclusion and construction of publics

It is widely accepted that dominant cultural institutions (such as the media) promote certain viewpoints and, by doing so, establish a dominant understanding of local circumstances. However, the uncertain political situation in contemporary Athens finds the Greek society, and especially the youth, struggling to voice their frustration and alternatives as a result of their exclusion from the public discourse. This is probably why protests and rallies take place with a significant frequency. Nonetheless, these actions should be seen as part of a multifaceted network of resistance, where information and ideas are

voiced in order to reach a public and to mobilize it accordingly. During this struggle for social space, information is transmitted through various forms, both physical and digital, which are operating as alternative public arenas.

In order to characterize a form of communication as 'alternative' and 'unofficial', or even 'counter' and 'subaltern', it presupposes that we consider another type as 'mainstream' and 'official'. This means that a certain type of political communication is imposed from above by professionals and, as aforementioned, does not express the views and demands of some citizens. In this battle of interests and purposes, these alternative communication channels are born and evolved. Besides, as Chaffee (1993, p. 3) argues, 'societies evolve communication systems that allow governments, organizations, and individuals to present their views, demands, needs, and ideas'. Thus, it is not surprising that new communication practices are formed, while some more 'conventional' ones re-emerge. In the latter category lies the practice of political wall writing, which has boomed since the beginning of the crisis, probably because graffiti 'gives expression to groups that otherwise could not comment upon or support current or perceived social problems' (Chaffee, 1993, p. 3).

The intensification of the politicized wall writing phenomenon (since the 2008 Greek Youth Uprising) in contemporary Athens has gradually transformed the urban landscape into 'a platform for negotiation and dialogue' (Tsilimpounidi & Walsh, 2010, p. 111). This innovative and provocative type of graffiti 'filled in the gaps of culture's hegemonic discourse' (Tsilimpounidi & Walsh, 2010, p. 111) and, by doing so, became a social space where unquestioned issues were raised and rights were exercised. Since the right to the city 'is dependent upon public space' (Mitchell, 2003, p. 5), this creative reclaim of the streets in contemporary Athens should not surprise us. Given that 'in the city, different people with different projects must

necessarily struggle with one another over the shape of the city, the terms of access to the public realm, and even the rights of citizenship' (Mitchell, 2003, p. 18), the city is an ideal place for both hegemonic views and their contestations to be expressed (Cresswell, 1996). Considering that, it might be argued that political graffiti does not initiate a new discussion about public space but brings into the foreground an existing one that is associated with the 'democratic' city (Mitchell, 2003, p. 4). 'Democratic' refers to those places that are open to multiple meanings and encourage debate and negotiation (Harris, 2006, p. 101).

The purpose of this article is not to address the notion of 'public' at large; it seeks to identify how graffiti can be seen as a 'public address' (Iveson, 2007) and its association with the contemporary pressing situation. Seen as a record of popular history (Chaffee, 1993, p. 4), in the changing patterns of graffiti writing we may read the struggles over the transformations currently taking place in a social, cultural and political level. What I argue is that, in these wall inscriptions, we may identify the shifts in the dominant public narratives and their oppositions. In other words, we may understand the counter-hegemonic discourse; an alternative narrative of what is going on in Greece nowadays. Through their creative way in initiating conversations, in these writings we may identify the lack, the need and the struggle for social space, communication and representation. My line of thinking is perfectly aligned with that of David and Wilson (2002, p. 7), according to whom graffiti should be treated as 'symbolic expressions that facilitate the transmission of ideas ... [as] a result of relations between people, places, and things that have emerged from historical circumstances'. This given, the question raised here can be put as follows: can the urban condition and spatial practices - such as graffiti - reveal the current Greek 'transitional' state? Does this situation influence the way people operate in and through the city? By studying the

behaviors and intentions that are shaped through this social condition, in the case of political graffiti in Athens I seek to find some answers to the aforementioned questions. To do so, I explore how urban artists transmit and circulate their views by forming publics through 'public address' (Iveson, 2007). What their (counter)publics are and how they come into being, enabling them to effect the mainstream public sphere, are also under consideration. Then, I investigate the geographical and spatial expression of political graffiti to finally capture how urban artists, through their innovative urban cartography, vibrate the resting dominant public sphere, opening paths of increased civic inclusion.

Since every struggle in the city is materially grounded and geographically expressed, my main claim here is that through graffiti 'new modes of living, new modes of inhabiting, are invented' (Mitchell, 2003, p. 18) that contain forms of reclaiming the city and are influenced by the current 'emergency state'. By exploring the ways in which these urban interventions engage with, or seek to alter, existing social conditions and communication practices, we might understand how they take the form of political mobilization or spatial contestation, illuminating alternative visions of urban life.

Inventing publics: politicized urban art and the process of 'public address'

It is important here to point out that every public form of wall writing is not graffiti. 'There is a difference between slogans, wallpaintings and graffiti. What makes the difference is neither the means nor the aesthetics of the pictures, but the topics, the intention of the agents and their potential audiences' (Avramidis, 2012). Bearing that in mind, the terms 'graffiti', 'wall writing' or 'urban art' will henceforth be used in this article to describe the most common forms utilized for political communication and opposition, namely two specific types of writing: political graffiti

and slogans.

Political wall writing, especially during periods of crisis, is neither a Greek phenomenon nor a new one. For instance, Armando Petrucci (1993, p. 3), referring to the intensification of hand-written epigraphy phenomenon during the period between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries in Italy, notes that it 'correspond[s] to the urban revolution taking place in the cities and to the consequent discovery of the civic and political function of outdoor urban space'. Nonetheless, the importance of walls as spaces of resistance has gradually increased, especially during contemporary era. This is the case as the established groups tend to use more effective and sophisticated ways to circulate their ideas such as the mass media (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 318). Anne Cronin, referring to advertisement and graffiti, argues that 'both these hegemonic and counter-hegemonic practices are able to function precisely because urban space is a site of multiple and contested meanings, visualities, and practices'. Cronin continues to suggest that 'they draw on 'the street' not merely as a location or space, but as an idea, an aesthetic, and a potential' (Cronin, 2008, p. 75).

One of the most powerful features of wall writing is that it cannot be easily avoided, since it is a surprising intrusion in our daily urban visual experience. As such, intentionally or not, many of us become the potential audiences of these extraordinary public discussions. Johanna Drucker (1998, p. 90) points out that the written language in the landscape 'represents an invisible conversation: someone is speaking, someone is being addressed'. Since a specific space and time are required for a conversation to take place, graffiti could not be an exception. However, its nature is 'distinctively different from the here-and-now of a social locale' (Brighenti, 2010a, p. 11).[2] Wall writing is a mediated public communication that invents 'a public' that differs from 'the public sphere'.

As Alan McKee (2005, p. vii) argues in his introduction to this

topic, 'the concept of the 'public sphere' is a metaphor that we use to think about the way that information and ideas circulate in large societies ... for thinking about how democratic culture should work'. Jürgen Habermas (1989) described *the* public sphere as an arena accessible to all citizens, where they can debate critically on issues of common interest. For him, the public sphere is the space between public power and private life. However, many recent scholarly works which study the (trans)formation of public sphere have directed their enquiry towards the multiplication of public sphere (Asen, 2000; Fraser, 1990; Warner, 2002). These studies, to a great extent, have criticized the universality and singularity of the notion of bourgeois public sphere (Habermas, 1989), according to which all citizens can potentially voice and debate their common concerns and be critical of the state actions. This shift towards multiplicity of public arenas has been generated by the realization of sociocultural diversity and communication complexity, since 'a single, overarching public sphere ignores or denies social complexity insofar, as it invokes a notion of publicity as contemporaneous face-to-face encounters among all citizens potentially affected by issues under consideration' (Asen, 2000, p. 425).

In her influential text *Rethinking the Public Sphere* (1990), Nancy Fraser recognized the fact that the male bourgeois public sphere excluded other marginal or/and oppressed groups from articulating their particular concerns, and she claims that those in the latter category form public spheres of their own. These 'subaltern counterpublics', as Fraser calls them, are 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs' (1990, p. 67). More recently, Robert Asen (2000, p. 425) argued that 'counterpublics signal that some publics develop not simply as one among a constellation of discursive entities, but as explicitly articulated alternatives to wider publics that exclude the

interests of potential participants'. He believes that counterpublics are formed to overcome these exclusions. Asen directs most of his enquiry towards the discursive quality of counterpublics, focusing on the identification and articulation of exclusion through alternative discourse practices. He also pinpoints the fact that the 'deliberative processes in public spheres tend to advantage dominant groups and to disadvantage subordinate groups' (Asen, 2000, p. 428). In this context, echoing Fraser, he supports the view according to which subordinated groups form counterpublics and engage in alternative communicative processes so as to bypass the supervision of dominant groups (Asen, 2000, p. 428).

Thus, it might be said that counterpublics[3] are mainly oppositional networks of communication that are formed by those excluded, deliberately or not, from the mainstream public sphere and its hegemonic discourse, through which they strive to express and circulate their common concerns, aiming to influence the dominant public sphere and to inform a wider public about their views. Counterpublics should be distinguished from social movements, protest groups and subcultures,[4] despite the fact that a part of these public formations are closely associated with some of them. The development of counterpublics is quite a common practice in periods of crisis, which are characterized by civic mobilization; it enables participants to circulate their discourses and to interact with prevalent public sphere, beside the latter's fortified status.

Considering that, those who engage in political wall writing can be seen to form a counterpublic, since '[it] is not a strict or bounded community, it is always territorially spread and its communications are mediated' (Brighenti, 2010a, p. 18). Apart from its internal dynamic for communication beyond the mainstream supervision, the politicized graffiti counterpublic of Athens is highly external since it 'addresses' its views to the city as a whole.[5] How a counterpublic is energized? 'Like all publics',

Michael Warner (2002, p. 120) suggests, 'a counterpublic comes into being through an address to indefinite strangers'. Graffiti writings 'do not exist by themselves, but they happen ... via transmission and perception' (Belting, 2005, p. 303). This given, the publics that these messages form should be conceptualized similarly since, as Warner notes, 'a public exists only by virtue of address... commence with the moment of attention' (Warner, 2002, p. 88).

The public, or rather, every public,[6] is supposed to be a social space that is formed for interaction and debate on issues of common interest. However, this conceptualization of the notion, as Andrea Brighenti (2010a, p. 18) notes, 'remains spatially and materially blind'. Since 'one cannot be the public, one can only be in the public', the role of materiality in publics' formation is crucial, because they are 'inherently mediated' (Brighenti, 2010a, p. 20).[7] Thus, the concept of (counter)public as described here, cannot be examined merely through a spatial lens or a social one, as it refers to both spaces and relations and subsequently it has both material and immaterial hypostasis. Publics emerge in a cultural, temporal and spatial context.

Kurt Iveson, in his recent study *Publics and the City* (2007), bridges the gap between the material and immaterial dimensions of publics and public space through the notion of 'public address'. He identifies the limitations in the conceptualization of public space both in 'topographical approach', which refers to specific kind of space in the city which is dominantly considered as 'public', and in 'procedural approach', which refers to space that is 'put to use at a given time for collective action and debate' (Iveson, 2007, p. 3). Instead, he counterproposes a less static model of public space that emerges upon 'public address'. Iveson redefines the notion of 'public sphere', bringing into the foreground the importance of city and the 'affordances' of specific urban sites to operate as channels for public address (Iveson, 2007, p. 13). The affordances of an object or environment

are its embedded properties that allow and furnish an individual's action (Gibson, 1986, p. 127). This given, no space is privileged or underprivileged in the public formation process, since 'publics have no proper location' (Iveson, 2007, p. 13). For Iveson, the power of specific urban sites to be either beneficial or hostile for certain kinds of public address and public making lies on 'the appreciation of [their] different opportunities' (Iveson, 2007, p.13). Besides, there are many and different ways to address a public; each choice of form, place and style carries not only risks and costs but also potential major gains in the type of public it may shape (Warner, 2003, p.14). Essentially, urban artists search for and consequently select and intervene to those places that 'afford' and fit their requirements.

It might be argued that an urban space or artifact becomes public when it is transformed into a channel of public address. Therefore, when graffiti addressees are engaged in the process, they already imagine well in advance their potential receivers, which are commonly personally unknown. In this respect, their public space 'is not a place, but situations for engagement' (Stara, 2009, p. 233). Thereby, by imaging their audiences in advance, they form counterpublics through public address; this is how graffiti (counter)public is formed and this is how, in turn, their public space is conceptualized. Acknowledging the importance of particular urban sites, and their potential combination with other sites or mediums,[8] practitioners of wall writing seek to sustain and enlarge their public address through them.

The geographical and spatial expression of politicized urban art

According to Lefebvre (1996, p. 109), 'the city is the projection of society on the ground'. Thus, the city is the place where both dominant views of society as well as their contestations are inscribed. Considering that urban space[9] is not the sum of abstract geometrical points and locations but places of meaning,

since 'they have distinctive meanings and values for persons' (Tilley, 1994, p. 15). Hence, urban spaces are the sites where many, and often conflicting, meanings and values meet. The way people think of space matters as it influences the way they act upon it. Thus, space should not be considered a static or neutral entity but constantly changing and dynamic. According to Doreen Massey (2005, p. 9), space should be recognized as 'product of interrelations', as 'the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity', always 'under construction'. For her, space is the dimension of the social that is always open to multiple meanings.

However, more often than not, some meanings are regarded as 'inappropriate', and consequently excluded. Tim Cresswell (1996) examines the situations where things appear to be 'wrong', or 'out of place'. In other words, he explores the geographies of deviance (or 'heretic') to unveil the dominant (or 'hegemonic') geographies, which are imposed through the 'naturalization' of space and its expectations. Of course, different people think of and act in space differently, forming different geographies, since every 'counter-', 'sub-' or dominant culture is socially constructed, geographically expressed and spatially constituted (Jackson, 1989: 3). Hence, Cresswell questions the 'taken for granted' relation between place and behavior and explains the importance of place as 'a powerful force in the ongoing hegemonic and counterhegemonic struggles' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 13). Thus, we may argue that inclusion and exclusion, resistance and acceptance are always present in urban social spaces. Considering that, graffiti can be seen as a 'resistance to sociogeographical exclusion' (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 43).

The plurality of cultures and the multiplicity of meanings assigned to certain places, leads Cresswell (1996, p. 13) to talk of the city as 'text'. David Frisby (2002, p. 15) identifies a few presuppositions that underpin the notion of the city as text,

amongst which are 'textuality', 'language', 'reader(s)' and 'legibility' in principle. However, according to Frisby, the later presupposition 'does not exclude erroneous readings'. Some of these 'erroneous readings' could also been seen through the 'heretic' lens. Cresswell uses the city-text analogy to underpin his argument that places become meaningful through practice, which is simultaneously both a form of production and interpretation; a writing and a reading. To extend Cresswell's point, we may recall Roland Barthes' words in his text *The Death of the Author* (1977), in which he suggests that the true locus of writing is reading. In his viewpoint, 'to give a text an author', in our case to associate a single meaning to specific place, 'is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing' (Barthes, 1977, p. 147). Place neither has a specific and solid meaning nor is this meaning produced through a linear route; place as text is written and re-written every time different people read it differently, since 'the reader always constructs a new text in the act of reading' (Hill, 1998, p. 26). However, dominant social groups and cultural institutions employ their cultural influence in a downwards direction and establish a 'preferred reading' (Jackson, 1989, p. 3),[10] imposing, at the same time, their values on space. Thus, when someone regards one reading as 'normative' and another as 'incompatible', then the latter reveals the contested interests in preserving or excluding 'a particular set of meanings' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 59).

Every single agent, who acts either antagonistically or normatively, reads a particular spatial text and reacts according to needs and ideology. Those who engage in political wall writing draw attention because they choose to interpret space differently, and thus, 'by disobeying the expectations of place, provide a heretical reading' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 165). This 'misinterpretation' of proper or dominant spatial meanings provides the field through which new modes of spatial inhabitation and communication emerge. Considering that, urban artists' 'transgressive'

geography becomes a tool of creative resistance,[11] counterpublic making and communication with peers and the like. It should be noted here that all 'heretic' geographies critically encounter existing orderings; they do not replace them or construct their own (Cresswell, 1996, p. 166). This is perhaps what Mitchell (2003, p. 81) describes as 'conflict over the legitimacy of various uses of space'. By manipulating the power of geography, wall writers question the latent, well dressed under naturalization, character of dominant topographies. Besides, the 'normal' is defined by its opposite: the abnormal; what is considered 'out-of-place' unveils what is 'in-place' and vice versa (Cresswell, 1996, p. 49).

What do graffitists gain by adopting a 'transgressive' attitude? The ensured anonymity, along with the ephemeral and illegal nature of this practice, provides producers with the necessary autonomy and freedom to avoid any visual and communicational discount (Avramidis, 2012). Rather, for Gonos et al. (1976, p. 42), the aforementioned allow them 'opportunities to use language, and present beliefs and sentiments, which are not acceptable in ordinary social life'. This illicit – but quite safe[12] and economic – practice, 'usually undertaken beyond the gaze of censoring authorities' (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 43) and by manipulating certain mediums together with the dynamic of the 'street', manages to address particular audiences[13] and excludes those that could be potentially hostile and hurtful in their counterdiscourse circulation (Iveson, 2007, p. 143).

Since urban art is produced freely, avoiding any potential censorship, the oppositional views on this practice should be mainly seen as 'struggles over its circulation as a form of public address' (Iveson, 2007, p. 143). These illicit public and politically oriented inscriptions are usually seen as 'out-of-place' (Cresswell, 1996), as 'property damage, cause and consequence of urban decay' (Iveson, 2007, p. 116). But as Cresswell argues, 'it is only superficially the material defacement of public property

that is at stake; the real issue is the image of the city' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 46). These writings supposedly enhance the 'feeling' of crisis and hurt the image of the city, signifying that Athens, as a capital, and thus Greece as a whole, is out of control, lawless and chaotic. They seem to signify a loss of control on the authorities' behalf, but as Anne Norton (2001, p. 193) argues, 'they object to graffiti not on aesthetic ground but on semiotic one ... they oppose on what the presence of graffiti signifies'. Examples from the recent history show that graffiti intensify, both in numbers and content, in various cities during periods of crises (e.g. 70s NY City, 80s London). It has also been observed that graffiti occurs at those districts that experience the most severe problems during this transitional state. This also seems to be the case in some areas in Athens such as Exarcheia and Psirri districts as well as along Piraeus and Panepistimiou str., which host respective emergent social conflicts and currently experience the greatest economic and social pressures. In this context, it is not surprising that some of these districts have become objects of architectural competitions[14] or urban regeneration programs, so as to re-establish a 'correct' image of the city.

Urban artists challenge public space by writing publicly things that meant to be private. Moreover, by marking places they do not own, graffitists claim ownership and make apparent that 'those with more property may also have more speech' (Norton, 2001, p. 194). However, apart from these oft-cited observations, urban art can be seen as something more than a symbolic declaration of power from subordinate groups; it is also 'an expression of resistance' (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 45). Studied as such, urban art 'can be used as an unobtrusive measure to reveal patterns of customs and attitudes of a society' (Stocker et al., 1972, p. 356). In our case, these writings offer a revealing insight not only into the communities that produce them but also into the relationship between graffitists, hegemonic relations and urban space. Through their -often unflattering- point of view, they

become an important and unfiltered source of information concerning the social and spatial attitude of a hidden side of Greek society.

Echoing Stocker et al. (1972) and Gonos et al. (1976), David and Wilson (2002, p. 44) argue that graffiti is socially produced and thus sensitive to societal change, while observing that the need to write particular types of graffiti is constantly changing. Here then, it is worth mentioning that Drucker (1998, p. 90-92) identifies two categories of signs in urban written language: one that derives from the material form, meaning recognizing the 'features of the method of production', and the other that derives from the linguistic form, namely such 'current slang, obsolete jargon, newly coined words' and so on. Then, both material and linguistic forms, meaning both the way of production and language used, can place a sign – in our case graffiti – in a temporal frame since it carries 'information about [the producer's] intention'. Thus, in the writings of these anonymous public commentators, we may identify the struggles over the current transformations in Greece.



Image 8: 'We are all immigrants'.
Graffiti piece at Victoria Square. Artist: JNOR. Photo: Author's own.

Considering that, observing and studying graffiti may reveal both the social and cultural transformations in contemporary Athens and the shift in spatially expressed resistance patterns, which are embedded in the current socio-political condition: the exceptional state of crisis. Hence, it is not surprising that many urban artists choose counter-memorandum topics. For example, a slogan on a public building at Panepistimiou str. says 'For sale', referring to the planned privatizations, while a few meters farther another one writes 'No more rescuing', referring to the financial rescue package. Since the current crisis is not merely financial but also social, the topics chosen are also concerned with civic exclusion, human rights and the impact of crisis on citizens' lives. For instance, a political graffiti by Jnor at Victoria square, where an accumulation of immigrants has occurred,



Image 9: '& Health Kaput'.
Graffiti piece on the abandoned building of the Social Insurance Institute at Piraeus str. Artist: Bleeps.gr. Photo: Courtesy Bleeps.gr.

depicts a woman wearing burka and reads 'We are all immigrants' (Image 8). Apart from the topics, the visual treatment of the messages is extremely crucial (Chaffee, 1993: 6-7) to communicate them more effectively, while positioning seems to be chosen either to be highly visible or symbolically. For example, a piece by Bleeps.gr which is symbolically placed on the abandoned building of the Social Insurance Institute at Piraeus str. represents a man on crutches and writes '&health kaput', referring to the cuts and reforms in the Greek NHS (Image 9).

A piece by Paul at Monastiraki district shows a shocked young woman together with the last words of a man who committed a politically motivated suicide[15]:

> Ladies and Gents, welcome to metropolis of chaos! Install security doors and alarming systems, lock yourselves in, open your TV and enjoy the spectacle. The next rebellion will be much stronger as our society rots… Get out in the streets next to your children and claim your stolen lives. Remember that when you were young you also wanted to change the world (Image 10).

The aforementioned examples are indicative of both the topics and the tactics adopted by Athenian street artists. They illustrate how over the last years Athens' walls have become 'witness surfaces' (Chmielewska, 2008) of the political transformations and social demands generated by the crisis; how graffitists manage to invent publics so as to get their messages across by adopting 'transgressive' attitudes.

David and Wilson argue that the shift in the customs and attitudes of place marking tactics 'imply changes in social circumstances' (2002, p. 45). Operating beyond any social constraints that could potentially limit their communicative power, graffitists do not mirror the established cultural norms



Image 10: Stencil at Vlahava St, which partially reproduces Savvas Metikidis' suicide note. Artist: PAUL. Photo: Author's own.

and power relations; contrary, they inscribe an alternative set of values on urban spaces and take advantage of the opportunities that those spaces afford to form a desired audience and circulate a particular discourse. Thus, by writing the city and inscribing new meanings, urban artists 'invent' space 'in which [their] rights can exist and be exercised' (Mitchell, 2003, p. 81). This given, following the intensification of the political graffiti phenomenon, we might argue that the ambivalent crisis environment cultivates such modes of conduct on rights claims, which derive from a respective lack. In other words, as heretic geographies increase, they reveal the hegemonic crisis. Of course, urban art should not be seen as a practice which intends to provide answers (Cresswell, 1996, p. 166); political writing challenges and poses questions, and in the process can be seen as a response to the lack of expression, creativity and political struggle in urban space, by envisioning a polyphonic and more democratic space.

Remapping the city: Athens' walls as contestable spaces

Walls dictate both spaces and behaviors in urban environments. They are a tangible method to govern and regulate activities, an efficient way to impose order and restrictions in physical space. This is probably why they are historically perceived as artifacts of exclusion par excellence, but they also 'tend to become part of the unquestioned, naturalized background of the here-and-now of a given urban environment' (Brighenti, 2010b, p. 323). However, this conceptual simplicity of walls, which derives from their unquestioned nature, is constantly challenged in and through practice. Thus, reading political graffiti as a heretic usage of Athens' walls, this study suggests a new 'mapping' of the urban social-cultural conditions. The term 'map' is used here to describe 'any form of representation that reveals unseen space, latent conditions or narratives in and of the city' (Brook & Dunn, 2011, p. xiii). Hence, the graffiti mapping reveals heretic interpretations of the current social-political phenomena and contexts. By making visible their own discourses and narratives of the current social and political situation, graffitists reveal the latent meanings of walls and the like. In this respect, urban walls are conceptualized here as 'public spaces' that are energized by short- or long-lived marks, meaning through public address.

Hénaff and Strong (2001, p. 4) suggest that public space is 'always contestable, precisely because whereas there are criteria that control admission to its purview, the right to enact and enforce those criteria is always in question'. Considering that, Athens' walls exist under a contested state because they have gradually become open to new interpretations and uses: they have been transformed from devices of division and exclusion into artifacts that permit -and maybe enhance- social interaction and communication, thus becoming spaces of social life and inclusion. Practitioners of political graffiti saw these liminal

spaces not as 'property', but as a medium for circulating their messages and counterdiscourse with each other and a wider public (Iveson, 2007, p. 116).

Over the last years, Athenian walls became the raw material through which views are expressed, demands are voiced and rights are exercised. Considering that, political graffiti can be seen as visual urban documents that reveal the current Greek transitional state. Of course, this type of wall writing is a not a cause, but a symptom of the crisis; it is another testament of how crisis is manifested in everyday life. Through their polemic and opportunistic relationship with specific urban components, urban artists forged an unofficial network that operates as an alternative communicational venue through which they discuss, are informed and comment on their perceived reality. The presence and spatial proliferation of these marks not only change the visual image of the city, but also the ways single individuals and informal groups manipulate and interpret the city and its artifacts in order to communicate their views. Political wall writing in Athens can be seen as a practice that upsets 'the indistinct order of urban space with the 'forces of exception'' (Brook & Dunn, 2011, p. 184). Through a tactical use of specific urban artifacts and by manipulating their communicational power, wall writers filled in the gaps of hegemonic discourse. By doing so, the margins invaded the center, the personal has been transformed into common, the unquestioned became contested, and, in the process, a new counterhegemonic reality gradually emerged.

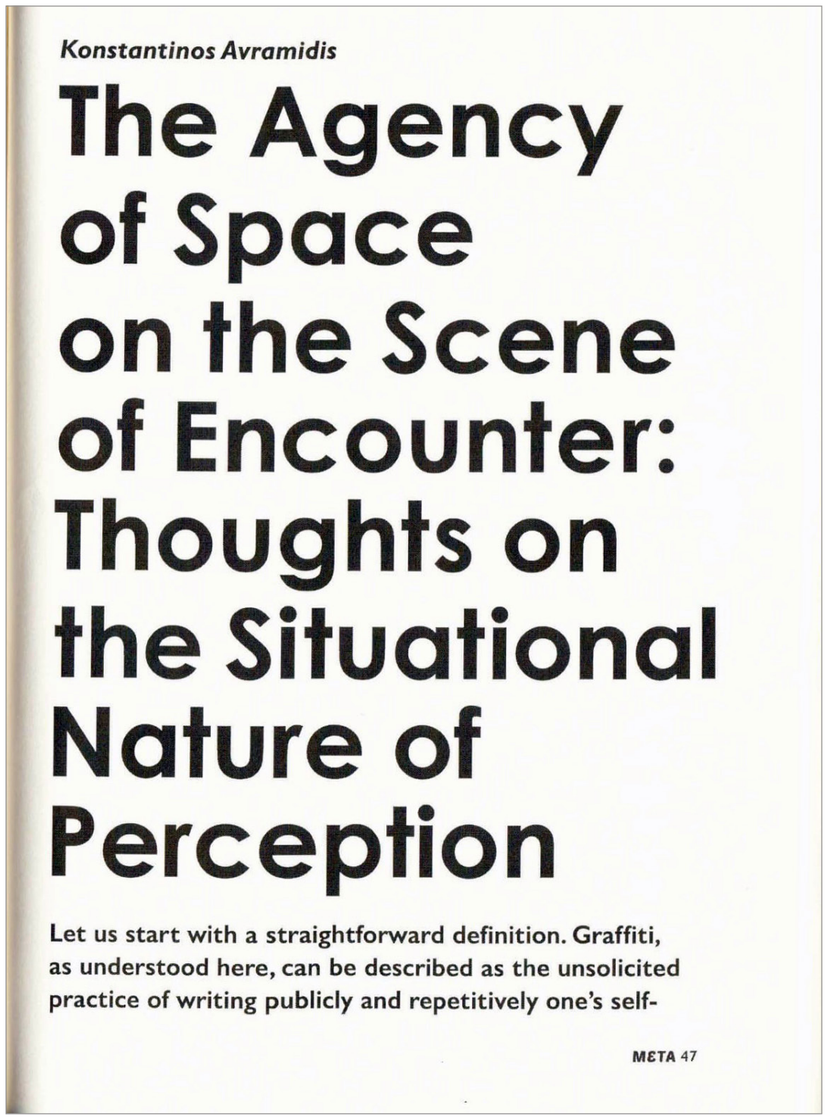
Through this discursive lens, political graffiti can be seen as a heretic reading of the city; a remapping of the emerging urban condition through which a new culture of public use is cultivated. Undoubtedly, the 'emergency state' in Athens leaves a lasting footprint on urban space and people's lives. Even though 'crises constrain our choices', political graffiti, by its marginal position, calls us to focus our attention on the narratives and latent conditions now operating in Greece so as to re-conceive the

current situation as a 'state of emergence' and to re-imagine our 'possible futures' (Calhoun, 2011, p. 42). Athenian graffiti are not only indicators of the crisis in contemporary Greece but also an expression of an emerging urban culture, which invades and, in the process, renews the identity and the image of the city. Politicized graffiti are personalized micro-geographies of resistance to the overwhelming forces of crisis.

6.2. Published II

The short essay entitled *The Agency of Space on the Scene of Encounter: Thoughts on the Situational Nature of Perception* was included in the exhibition catalogue *Meta* (2014) edited by art historian Konstantina Drakopoulou and curator Andreas Fakis. The homonymous exhibition presents works by former Greek graffitists, and currently recognised fine artists, b. and Alexandros Vasmoulakis. The goal of the catalogue is to document the artists' development over the years, from their early illicit practice in the streets to their transformation into mural artists and, more recently, their presence into a gallery space in the context of the exhibition. My article is one of the four short essays discussing issues related to the work of the artists.

The essay focuses on the contexts of production and reception of the artists' work rather than the artworks per se. Based on Alfred Gell's work on art and agency (1998), the essay discusses the agency of the artworks and the agency of the spaces in which the artworks are produced and/or displayed. By comparing the settings of production and reception of the artists' pieces indoors and outdoors, the article traces the transformation of the meaning of the artworks due to their inherently situated character. Ultimately, the essay challenges the situation of these works that changes their very nature and claims that graffiti cannot exist in a gallery space. This publication (and exhibition) almost coincides with the following one which takes place in the Onassis Cultural Centre.



Konstantinos Avramidis

The Agency of Space on the Scene of Encounter: Thoughts on the Situational Nature of Perception

Let us start with a straightforward definition. Graffiti, as understood here, can be described as the unsolicited practice of writing publicly and repetitively one's self-

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invented identity on urban surfaces with the purpose of gaining some sort of reputation among peers. It is neither the means used nor the aesthetics or the topics of the images produced that define graffiti. On the contrary, it is the intention of the agents and the place where they display their work that make a piece be considered as graffiti or artwork.

Graffiti is public by definition; it does not exist in private space(s). Here, by "private" I mean any kind of space that, in one way or another, restricts the access of the public and thus limits the public visibility and experience of the work (e.g., a flat, a gallery, etc.). For example, a graffiti piece in a gallery, whether on a canvas or directly executed on a wall, is not graffiti. It is a 'graffiti-influenced' painting. At best, it is a painting whose aesthetic principles stem from the stereotypical stylistic canon of graffiti subculture. Yet, here I am not interested in (counter) arguing whether this or that is graffiti or art, because I do not find such a categorical separation productive. In fact, I think it is quite trite. After all, for a maker, the transition from the street to a gallery is never univocal.[i]

What I do find quite intriguing is the concept of transition, or 'metavasi' in Greek, which also makes me wonder about the title of this book, i.e. 'meta'. Is this shift from the streets a transition or a transcription (metagraphy)? Is it a transference (metaphora) or even a transposition (metatopisi)? The prefix 'meta', or 'trans' in English, deserves further elaboration. Interestingly, 'meta-' is both temporal and spatial whereas the frequently corresponding English 'trans-' is primarily spatial. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'meta' stands for 'after' and denotes change, transformation, permutation, or substitution. The word-forming element 'trans', on the other hand, means 'across, beyond, and through'. In a sense, 'meta' seems to include the merely temporal prefix 'hystero-', the Greek counterpart of the prefix 'post-' that means 'afterwards'. What I want to emphasize is that 'meta' implies that the change of place or time leads to the change of the nature of the object in question. That is to say that the move from the street to the gallery, the shift from a particular context to another which is associated with different ways of being, results to an alteration of the state of the object itself.

Here, I do not privilege the one or the other. Nor do I argue that the pieces in the street are original while those hanging on exhibition walls are mere commodities. What I do assert, however, is that they are different; both in terms of production and, primarily, perception. For me, the difference derives from the agency of space in or on which a piece of work is displayed and experienced as well as the intentions and potential audiences of its maker. In what follows I primarily focus my discussion on the former.

The anthropologist Alfred Gell provides an insightful theory of agency of the artworks which is of interest

here because it does not make a clear distinction between persons and objects.[ii] For him, human and non-human agency are interrelated and constantly modified. Gell uses a specific terminology to describe how artworks can be seen as the mediators, or "indexes", of agency. The key terms of his analysis are "agent" and "patient"; the former refers to the performer of the action whereas the latter, often also mentioned as "recipient", has to do with the viewer or the audience who experiences the action. Gell's concept of agency is inherently relational in that in any transactional situation, or rather at the moment of encounter, there is an agent who is exercising agency and, at the receiving end of it, there is a patient that recognises it as such. Agent and patient share a reciprocal relationship and interchangeable positions.

An instance of agency is the situation during which a transaction takes places; it is the moment when a relation between image and spectator is established. Gell argues that social agency can be exercised "relative to "things" or "by things"; it can be "invested in things" or emanate from things".[iii] Thus, 'things' are simultaneously mirrors that reflect agency and screens upon which agency is projected; material objects 'speak' on behalf of their producers and index their intentions. The receiver, on the other end, energises the agency by recognizing the ascribed intentions of the agent.

Gell believes that when we encounter an artefact we tend to mentally seek the source of its production so as to attribute it to the potential maker, because, as he aptly argues, it "invites the question 'how did this thing get to be here?'".[iv] Since our natural vantage point is that of the originating person, "[we] imagine the origination of a painting from the vicariously entertained standpoint of the painter". In other words, we do not just view material art-objects but we experience them physically, corporeally and mentally; we embody the infused agency that they mediate. In my opinion, this is what distinguishes the perception of artworks in the street and elsewhere: we consider the body that produces the work in context, in its physical scene. The agency of the work is different because the scene of its production is different. The latter, whether a studio or a wall in the street, constrains and designates the performance of the maker. Thus, by positioning ourselves in the standpoint of the producer, we experience the physical and potential circumstantial constraints of the historical moment of the execution (e.g., darkness and speed in the case of an illicitly produced public piece; or calmness, attentiveness and technical virtuosity in a commissioned artwork).

Artworks index the agency of their makers. Yet, artworks do not exist in vacuum; they are placed in the physical world. The environment in which an artwork is placed has an agency of its own that acts on the object and significantly changes its perception. Meaning does not exist by itself; it happens. Also, it is subjective, plural and circumstantial. It is constructed the very moment one

encounters a work. The scene of production and the scene of perception is by definition different; the artwork is never experienced during its execution. It is in the historical here and now of encounter that the work signifies. Thus, the scene of encounter, the 'meta-scene' of its production, is of even greater importance.

The meaning of a work emanates from the surface it occupies which is never a tabula rasa: it is loaded with cultural meaning, societal conventions and material restrictions. For example, a canvas or an exhibition wall upon which a painting is executed is prepared to meet the needs of the artist. Contrary, the surfaces on the street are treated as 'found objects'. Further, the 'white walls' of an exhibition space are often considered to be neutral and semiologically inert. Yet, this is not at all the case. Whiteness indexes purity and cleanness. Also, the meaning of white and any other colour is culturally designated. For instance, in Athens, white colour has a different meaning compared to any other urban context due to its famous title as the 'White City'. All that is to say that artwork and surface share a symbiotic relationship and reciprocally contribute to each others' meaning.

A work on a surface does not exist in isolation. It is influenced by the entire visual environs that host it. For example, a work in a gallery usually coexists with other pieces of the same or similar artists. In the case of a solo exhibition, by walking through the works, one can literally be submerged in the world of the artist. Contrary,

a work in the street develops, often competing, relations with all the semiotic elements of its surrounding (e.g. architecture, commercial billboards, municipal signage, etc.). However, it is not only the visual aspect that is important. Perhaps the most significant element in the perception of the artwork is what I am inclined to term 'sensorial horizon',[iv] by which I mean the entirety of the sensorial stimuli produced to an active moving body in a particular situation. This horizon is never closed or unique but always in the making; it is constantly under construction as the active body changes positions and moves in physical space across things. For instance, the sensorial horizon of a person perceiving an artwork in a gallery might be comprised by the stable artificial light, the comfortable temperature, the low noise levels, the few people walking around the room calmly, and the homogenous colour background of the walls that is often used so as to give prominence to the canvases. Contrary, the sensorial horizon in the street is considerably different: unstable natural light, changing weather conditions, noise and air pollution, visual obstacles, fragments of different colours and patterns, and so forth. All these elements, along with the agency of the work, are fused at the moment of encounter and change its perception.

Perception is always situational and meaning making is contextually unique. Even though every artwork indexes the agency of its maker and has an agency of its own, its experience is largely dictated by the agency of the space in which it is encountered. This framing allows us to move

beyond the dominant, yet sterile, categorical conceptualisation of graffiti as either art or vandalism, and enables us to appreciate the different nature of each work in its own unique context. Ultimately, what I suggest here is that, in order to capture the essence of the notion 'meta' in the context of the current discussion, as both transitional and transformational for the maker and the artwork, we might have to shift our focus from the mere content or aesthetics of the artwork to the material surface in and / or on which the agency is manifest as well as to the space it occupies. At the moment of encounter context does matter.

[i] A maker who has experienced the writing in the streets is not only equipped with a unique stylistic vocabulary but also with a trained body. For an in-depth examination of the transformative nature of graffiti writing and the transferable gains of the practice see: Avramidis, K., Drakopoulou, K. (forthcoming, 2015) *From Urban to Virtual Space and Back: Learning Within and From Signature Graffiti Subculture*. In P. Jandric and D. Boras (eds.), *Education and the Network: A Critical Encounter*. New York: Springer.

[ii] Gell, A. (1998) *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[iii] Gell, A. (1998) Ibid., p. 18

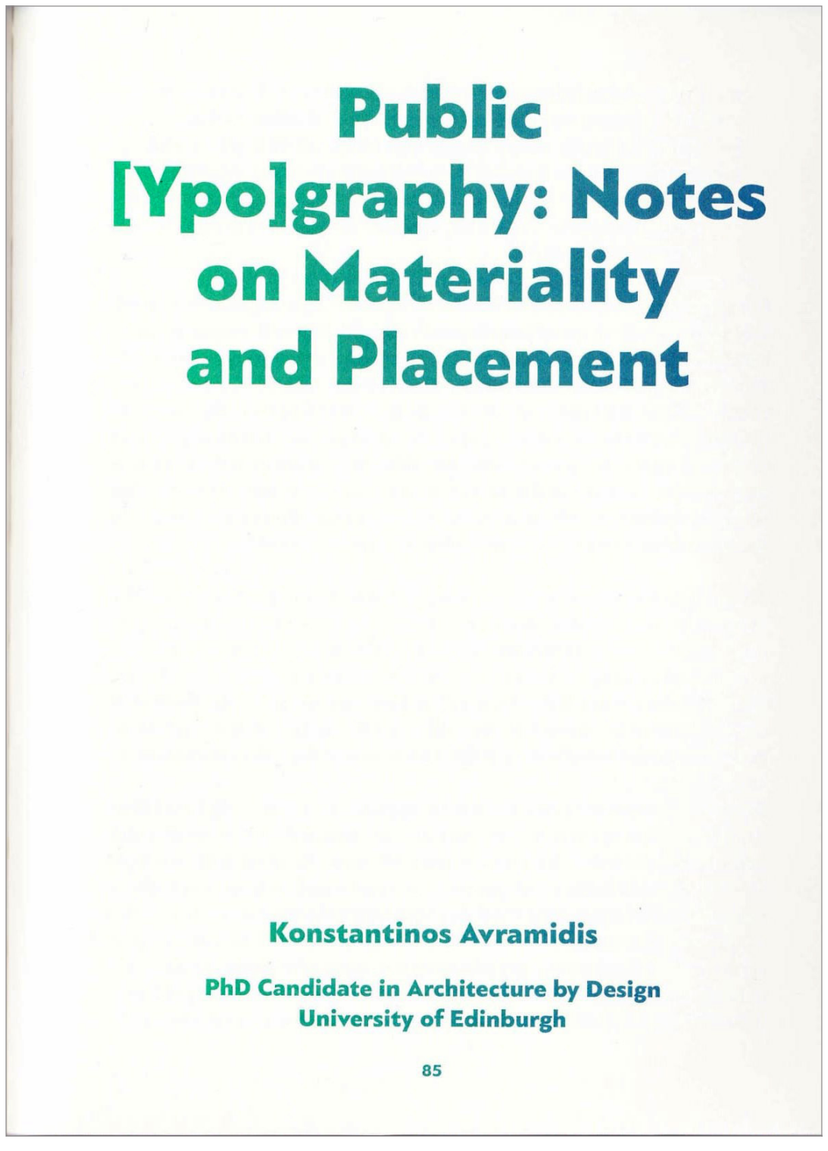
[iv] Gell, A. (1998) Ibid., p. 67

[v] Here, the concept of 'horizon' is inspired from the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics, and specifically from Hans-Georg Gadamer who introduced the notion in his enquiry on situatedness. Yet, here I use the term 'horizon' in a different way. Gadamer, H. (1997) *Truth and Method*. London: Continuum, p. 301

6.3. Published III

The essay entitled *Public [Ypo]graphy: Notes on Materiality and Placement* is a chapter in the catalogue *No Respect* (2014) edited by curator Marilena Karra. This book was the publication accompanying the exhibition at the Onassis Cultural Centre which is part of my research corpus. As discussed extensively in the main body of this dissertation, I participated in the exhibition and the conference, and both my graffiti writings and writings on graffiti are featured in all the three volumes which comprise the *No Respect* book set.

In a sense, it is not accidental that the *No Respect* volumes occupy the largest and most central part of the cover image of this appendix chapter. The role of this publication is key in many regards. As we have already seen, the catalogue is examined as a conceptual image. Its three components reflect the three-fold manner in which this thesis is undertaken whilst relating graffiti's surrounding discourse and scholarship (text) with the illicit practice in the city of Athens (artists) and its institutionalised expression in the OCC (exhibition). As for the essay per se, the arguments it develops are related to the unique, material and situated character of graffiti. In other words, the (essay of the) catalogue comprises the theoretical core of this thesis.



Where do signatures get their power? Is it from the written name that evokes the identity of a specific author, or from the trace of the physical gesture made by the hand attesting to an individual's presence, or from the intention thus expressed by someone who is acting deliberately?
Beatrice Fraenkel[1]

Graffiti writings are rarely examined in context. Apart from a few scholarly works,[2] still there is very limited research focused on graffiti and its place of attachment. Graffiti are often reduced into empty, yet media attractive and visually compelling, signs or considered to be products of subversive, marginal and illicit groups or individuals. This kind of framing overlooks, or rather systematically ignores, the uniqueness of the mark, agent and place. Contrary, this study understands graffiti as a practice of writing, and is based on the conviction that every graffito is an unrepeatable individual expressive gesture that takes place in a specific urban context in a particular historical moment.

This article focuses on a specific kind of public writing, signature graffiti, that can be described as the unsolicited practice of writing repetitively one's self-invented name, known as 'tag', on urban surfaces with the purpose of gaining some sort of reputation among peers. The definition of signature graffiti does not stem from the topics or the aesthetics of the pictures produced. Rather, it is the intentions of the graffitists and their compliance with graffiti 'rules' that define the subculture.

When contemporary graffiti made its appearance around the late 1960s, graffitists used to refer to their practice as 'writing'. It is from this definition that the term 'writers', as practitioners like to call themselves, still survives. Writers used the term *writing*, which is grammatically a gerund, to describe what they do. This fact emphatically reveals that writers were interested in the action of their practice. The term *graffiti*, on the other hand, being grammatically a collective noun, reduces the act into a mere result and the uniqueness of the individual gesture into a homogenized plural form. Graffiti, although an etymological derivative of 'graphy' ('writing'), is rarely examined as such. Even less frequently, it is explored as signature writing (ypo-graphy). Building upon Ella Chmielewska's context-sensitive analysis of urban writing,[3] the aim of this paper is to further investigate these core elements of graffiti, by examining their implications through the lens of materiality and placement.

While acknowledging Jacques Derrida's insights on signature and its relation to the presence,[4] or rather double absence, of both the signer and the reader, this short essay follows a different, yet sometimes parallel, path. Signature graffiti is an extraordinarily fertile subject to explore issues related to text and image, singularity and repeatability, presence and absence, identity and authorship, embodiment and materiality, placement and validity. Here, I primarily focus my discussion on the last three conceptual pairs that correspond to Beatrice Fraenkel's line of inquiry as evinced by the opening quote. In other words, this paper proposes a circumstantial reading of signature graffiti writings so as to underline the decisive role that context plays in their production and interpretation.

Graphy: On Materiality

The philosopher of communication Vilém Flusser believes that in order to grasp the meaning of writing, one should look at its original form, i.e. the ancient inscriptions, and reminds us that the Greek word 'graphy', which means 'to scratch', still connotes the 'penetrating' nature of the writing gesture. For him, 'to write is to in-scribe, to penetrate a surface, and a written text is an inscription, although, as a matter of fact, it is, in the vast majority of cases, an onscription'.[5] This 'inscriptional' conceptualisation of writing directly links the text with the surface of writing and foregrounds the importance of the material qualities of writing. The writing surface, instrument and substance, largely dictate the semiotic meaning of graphism. Here, I do not agree with the media scholar Sonja Neef, who believes that graffiti, due to its ability to be 'performed' in light painting, is better understood as "an ephemeral

'live' performance rather than a permanent 'inscription', in Flusser's sense".[6] Graffiti is a performative 'onscription'; Flusser's conceptualisation of writing as onscription does not have to do with writing's permanence but with its material aspects.

Flusser defines writing as 'a penetrating gesture which informs a surface'.[7] Writing is informed by and informs the surface of writing; graphism, its surface of application and the instrument of writing, share a reciprocal relationship. However, the surface 'is not the final aim of the gesture, but only a medium through which the gesture aims at readers'; writing "is a gesture which 'informs' a surface for the sake of informing others".[8] Thus, it is a gesture of 'communication' that presupposes a potential audience, not necessarily physically present, who incites the reading and energises the text. Writing, as well as graffiti writing, is a projective gesture: it is related to the future of its actualisation and is dependent upon its medium, i.e. the surface of application.

The physical prerequisites of writing (i.e. writing body, writing instrument, writing surface) are often taken for granted, rather than being seen as components of meaning and interpretative opportunities. The linguist Roy Harris identifies three 'sets of factors' that contribute to the meaning making of any written sign: biomechanical, macrosocial and circumstantial.[9] Biomechanical factors refer to the physiological and material barriers that designate the production and perception of graphism. Macrosocial factors refer to the cultural restrictions that define the 'proper' location of a sign which in turn affect its value. Circumstantial factors refer to the particular situation within which the writing is integrated.

Harris prompts us to probe the relationship between surface and text, and to take into account the material context of the writing's graphic space. He considers the way in which a text is written and the surface it occupies as semiologically valuable. For him, the writing surface is not just the background of writing; rather, it plays an active role in the creation and perception of writing. Further, the selection of a writing surface is subject to all three sets of factors. Harris believes that the text, or the graffito in our case, 'determines the selection of the surface', 'presupposes certain physical properties of the surface' and 'functions as a comment on the surface it occupies'.[10]

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen argue that materials play an important role as signifiers.[11] Material semiosis, though, is neither a-cultural nor a-historical; it acquires different meanings which are largely dictated by its contexts and modes of production. To illustrate their point, Kress and van Leeuwen use precious metals as an example. They believe that what is considered 'precious' in a specific period and region is not necessarily the case elsewhere. The preciousness of a metal does not only have to do with its scarcity and physical properties but also with the meaning and signification that specific people in a particular spatiotemporal context attach to it. Writing on a bricked or pure white marble wall creates a considerably different visual effect; concurrently, different cultures invest different meanings in each material. For example, as Chmielewska argues, in Warsaw 'the brick wall is not representative of the local building character, but rather, it functions as a highly charged symbolic surface... the brick wall designates the war-damaged ruins'.[12] Similarly, in Athens the marble wall is not just a traditional material used for buildings facades, but also a heavily loaded semiotic feature that refers to the classical past of the city.

Every kind of writing is inherently mediated. Graffiti depends on its surface of application in the same way that the parasite relies on its host. Harris puts it aptly: 'without the writing surface the written characters would have no graphic space to occupy'.[13] The graphic mark and the surface it occupies appear together; they are inseparable components of any inscription. This interdependence between graphism and the graphic surface leads the photographer Brassaï, who has extensively documented public inscriptions in Paris during the interwar period, to claim that 'it is the wall that gives to all these graffiti their stylistic unity, their family resemblance, as if they had been drawn by the same hand'.[14] For him, it is neither the content nor the graphic look of urban writings that make them stylistically united; rather, graffiti owe their

likeness to the resemblance of Parisian walls.[15] In other words, it is the material writing surface that renders them concurrently similar and unique. Given the reciprocity of text and graphic space, of graffito and wall, it is important to cease examining public writings in terms of mere content and pay closer attention to the material sign object on which the agency of writing is manifest.

Conceptualizing graffiti as writing, thus foregrounding the material and semiological aspects of this act, enables us to move beyond the standardized questions, such as 'what does graffiti mean'? After all, as Chmielewska notes, 'signature graffiti is preoccupied with the writer's identity ... the writer's name is its sole message'.[16] The question now can be restated: 'what does graffiti do'? This point has been recently raised by graffiti scholars, most notably by Jennifer Edbauer and Sonja Neef, in the context of graffiti as an eventful, situated and performative mark-making, or in other words, as handwriting.[17]

Ypo-graphy: On Placement

Sonja Neef argues that 'strictly speaking, graffiti is handwriting. As such ... [it] is always an eventful action'.[18] Handwriting is the material evidence of the corporeal presence of a person in a specific spatio-temporal situation. It is also considered to be anchored with individuality: handwriting is seen as a material trace of personhood that stands for its producer, as unique as the fingerprint of the living physical hand that created it and as singular as the identity of its maker. Every single hand-written graffito should be seen as a distinctive physical action that indexes the presence of a unique body in a historically defined moment in a specific place, a past here and now.

The classical studies scholar Kristina Milnor, in her study of the 'literary' graffiti in Pompeii, states that the materiality of the graffito text 'deliberately calls attention not just to the words themselves but to the act that created them ... [Graffiti] are meaningful not just as texts qua texts but as traces of the act of inscribing them'.[19] She prompts us to consider graffiti writing as an act rather than as mere text. She encourages us to shift our focus from the message of the graffito to the agency of the graffito and from the content of writing to the context of writing.

Every single graffito is the material result of the interplay between a body, a surface and an instrument in a particular context and a specific locale. Fraenkel argues that 'the graphic trace incarnates the hand and body that produce it, as well as the support that receives it'.[20] Considering that, in order to appreciate the uniqueness of each graffito, we should consider the body that performs the act of writing in context. The physical scene of graffiti writing constrains and designates the performance: darkness, illicitness, speed, pressure, outfit, physical restrictions, and even the weather conditions, are all important in the historical moment of the execution. Every graffito is simultaneously 'a visual sign and a tactile gesture';[21] it is a repetitive performative sign, yet always a singular event.

Framing graffiti hand-writings as signatures further complicates the already peculiar nature of this writing genre and challenges the conceptions of writing as a mere transcription of language. Roy Harris claims that 'when we come to the signature there is strictly no oral equivalent that can be produced ... the signature is essentially a phenomenon of writing'.[22] The signature is primarily, if not exclusively, a visual medium. The visual cultures scholar W.J.T. Mitchell addresses the relationship of image and text and asserts that "writing, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and the verbal, the 'imagetext' incarnate".[23] For him, writing 'makes language (in the literal sense) visible'; it is a 'visible language' that can be understood both discursively, i.e. as language, and figuratively, that is, as material visual image with aesthetic qualities.[24] Mitchell's conceptualization allows us to move beyond the categorical limitations of graffiti scholarship and the dominant binary framing of writing as *either* text *or* image. The examination of graffiti *as* signature focuses on the interplay of text and image, content and graphic look, sound and visual appearance.

Anonymity and identity share a very special relationship in the graffiti subculture. By inventing new names and putting them into public circulation, graffiti writers are able to create new links with their everyday identities and establish new connections between their past and present.[25] In doing so, they are freed from societal conventions and can shape their new identities as they wish. The power of naming is evident in the way that surnames pass from one generation to the next, thus becoming symbols of family 'heritage'. More importantly, naming involves two parties: the name giver and the name receiver. Graffiti subverts this norm: writers 'self-baptize' themselves.[26] This act of self-naming has already been examined by Jean Baudrillard who regards graffiti signatures as 'empty signifiers', lacking 'content and message'.[27] Here, I am more interested in the signature rather than the name, while acknowledging the fact that 'a name is not a signature ... [and that] a signature based on an alias is intrinsically suspect'.[28] After all, graffiti, like signatures, are not powerful due to their message but because of their placement. The 'where' of graffiti is its strength.

'One cannot write anything anywhere', says Harris.[29] Where, on what, and when one signs is of great significance. Is it the same to put a signature on a blank piece of paper and on a contract? The contact is full of conventions and is delivered to the signatory already formulated. One cannot damage the contract or sign it with a non-permanent writing instrument (eg. a pencil) because that would question the validity of the mark. Nor can one sign wherever they wish; there is a prepared and designated location at the lower right-hand side of the paper which pre-supposes that the signatory had read and accepts the terms of the agreement. In fact, the Greek word 'ypography' ['signature'] still connotes these spatial correlations. Perhaps the best way to translate the word 'ypo-graphy' is 'sub-script' rather than 'signature': that which is written underneath an above-written pre-existing text. This basic mark of self-expression and presence entails legal obligations and expresses consent. In the case of graffiti signature, quite the opposite seems to be happening. Yet, in both instances, the meaning of the signature emanates from its specific placement on the surface.

The same is the case in urban space. There is a spatial 'contract' on which graffitists write that eventually affects the meaning of the wall and the mark. This 'contract' is loaded with societal conventions, material restrictions and cultural expectations. It may also imply legal sanctions or implicate issues of ownership and authority. It is this latter characteristic of graffiti that invites reactions. The urban equivalent of the paper contract, i.e. the wall, is encountered with several conventions as well. Despite the fact that it is illegal to write on it, a wall is never a *tabula rasa*: it is loaded with cultural meaning and social memory. In a sense, each wall is like a prepared contract document; it affects and is affected by the position of the signature-mark. Text and writing surface share a symbiotic relationship and reciprocally contribute to each others' meaning.

The meaning of signatures and graffiti writings at large, is determined by, or rather derives from, their placement in a spatial and temporal context; it is anchored in their distinctive physical position in the surface and the unique historical moment of their execution. They are place and time specific, in that their meaning is indissolubly linked to their positioning. Chmielewska borrows the term 'topo-sensitivity' from Umberto Eco in order to describe this special semiotic condition of some signs to mean different things depending on their position. For Eco, topo-sensitive is a sign that 'acquires the fullness of its meaning only when certain circumstantial features (relating to its placement in this rather than that place) add additional meanings'.[30] Where the sign is sitting and its distinct attachment with the surface affect its signification. A topo-sensitive sign owes its meaning to its 'spatial or temporal co-ordinates': the 'contextual position' of the sign is the 'formator' of its meaning.[31] Signatures are topo-sensitive signs par excellence; the placement of a signature on a contract paper, e.g. at its top left corner, or the time of signing, e.g. placing a signature on a blank paper prior to the finalization of the agreement text, imply a completely different meaning compared to the 'proper' signing procedure.

Echoing Fraenkel, Harris identifies a paradox of the signature: it is required not only to be unique but also 'recognizably uniform'.[32] A similar tension can be recognized in signature graffiti: while the tag, or the writing style of a graffitist at large, has to be personal and distinct, at the same time it needs to be identifiably similar to other graffiti writings and share, at least partially, the same stylistic vocabulary as stipulated by the subculture. The boundaries between global and local, personal and collective, uniqueness and sameness are fused in signature graffiti. The paradox of signature graffiti lies in its placement: a mark that is meant to be personal is written in public display. Finally, in terms of positioning, a spontaneous personal gesture is eventually dictated by a sophisticated, subculturally-defined, theory of placement.

Hystero-Graphy

The relationship of signature graffiti with its place of attachment is both conflicted and unique. Although polemic, a graffito is highly dependent upon its place of application; although self-referential, it seeks attention. Graffiti writers phenomenally show no respect to the context, yet it is the very same urban context that gives power and meaning to their writings. Graffiti, in a similar way to signatures that share a very special bond with what is written above them, do not exist in isolation. Once placed in the city, they develop relationships: they interact and are in a constant dialogue with each other. Further, in the case of graffiti, a written mark should be seen in relation to other signatures not only within the local but also the global subcultural scene.

Graffiti signatures owe their resemblance to the subculture's stylistic canon and the common writing instruments used. Their uniqueness, on the other hand, stems from the singularity of the writing body, the personal graphic look and the particular placement in a historical here and now. In examining graffiti as writing, let alone as signature writing, the surface, i.e. the substrate of writing on which the mark is manifest, acquires a unique role in meaning making. The surface is not only the graphic environment and material precondition of writing, but also its place of articulation. Despite its modest, although sometimes calligraphic, look, a signature changes decisively the meaning, or even the status, of the object it occupied. It does not only evince an indexical relation between a mark and a person nor does it merely imply authorship. Once signed, the signobject, i.e. the mark along with the surface upon which it is written, is transformed into something else, thus entering into a new hermeneutic circle.

Ultimately, what emerges from the current analysis is the need to adopt a multifocal approach that brings together the material and spatial specificity of the individual graphic mark with its wider urban landscape. The framing of graffiti as signature writing, together with a topo- and context-sensitive reading of marks, allow us to move from the plural form and homogenizing nature of the term 'graffiti' to the singularity of the notion 'graffito', and enable us to appreciate the 'hybrid nature that makes such marks simultaneously familiar and exceptional'.[33]

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[25] See also Avramidis, K., & Drakopoulou, K. (forthcoming, 2015) 'From Urban to Virtual Space and Back: Learning Within and From Signature Graffiti Subculture'. In P. Jandric & D. Boras (Eds.) *Education and the Network: A Critical Encounter.* New York: Springer.

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6.4. Published IV

The chapter entitled *Moving from Urban to Virtual Spaces and Back: Learning In/From Signature Graffiti Subculture* (2015) – which we written together with art historian Konstantina Drakopoulou – was included in the volume *Critical Learning in Digital Networks* edited by learning technologists and critical pedagogy scholars Petar Jandrić and Damir Boras. The aim of the book is to document different disciplinary voices on the research potentials of the emergent field of critical learning and its applications in various settings and domains. Our work – an extension of a previous collaborative piece investigating graffiti's relationship to and critique of education – sits in the section 'Virtual Worlds, Networked Realities' that studies the convergences between physical and virtual realities in different learning situations.

The chapter examines bottom-up development and maintenance of vernacular networked learning practices in the context of signature graffiti subculture. Networked learning is analysed on three interrelated domains: graffitists' interpersonal interactions, the graffiti media, and the city. The key argument of this essay, i.e. the relationship of graffiti with education, is beyond the scope of the current thesis. Yet, in order to develop this argument the chapter explores the technologies and modes of documentation, manipulation and circulation of graffiti imagery. In so doing, it opens up issues related to the de-situation and re-situation of graffiti in new contexts, which are core aspects in this dissertation.

Chapter 7
Moving from Urban to Virtual Spaces and Back: Learning In/From Signature Graffiti Subculture

Konstantinos Avramidis and Konstantina Drakopoulou

This chapter focuses on a specific kind of urban writing, signature graffiti, that has its roots in the streets of Philadelphia and the underground train system of New York City during the late 1960s, that has nowadays evolved into a global subculture. Signature graffiti can be described as the unsolicited, frequently illicit, practice of writing repetitively one's self-invented identity (e.g., a name, logo, character or any personal indicative sign) on urban surfaces with the purpose of gaining some sort of reputation among peers. The definition of signature graffiti lies neither in the topics nor the aesthetics of the pictures produced but in the intention of the agents. The compliance with graffiti rules, which determine behaviors and attitudes, goals and strategies, praise and disapproval, define the subculture.

Signature graffiti is inherently linked with personal identity and style. This emphasis on personal style prompts "writers," as practitioners like to call themselves, to organize groups, known as "crews," constructing, according to Richard Lachmann, "a total art world" for discussing new designs, devising aesthetic standards, and judging innovations (1988, p. 247). Through this process, writers negotiate a shared sense of style and, at the same time, they elaborate their own, thus developing both a personal and a group identity. As graffiti styles became more and more sophisticated,

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© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2015
P. Jandrić, D. Boras (eds.), *Critical Learning in Digital Networks*,
Research in Networked Learning, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-13752-0_7

an exchange of knowledge and techniques turned out to be essential. This fact, along with the illicit nature of the practice, made learning, networking, and collaboration among peers a central need from the very early days of the subculture.

For graffitists, the available resources, whether physical or mediatized, coupled with their interpersonal interactions are the ways to gain access to instructions and consultancy. The way writers learn and represent their craft became important from the very beginning; graffiti is all about acquiring, evolving, and demonstrating culturally meaningful knowledge and skills. Collaboration and peer evaluation gave rise to a graffiti learning field in its own right. Signature graffiti gradually evolved into an alternative cultural field which enabled practitioners to educate themselves outside dominant educational institutions and develop skills relevant for their everyday lives. Our decision to restrict our research to signature graffiti lies in the fact that this type of public writing, compared to others (e.g., political graffiti), is the only massively global culture that reflexively appropriated technology, extensively used or invented various media of distribution, encouraged collaboration among its practitioners by evolving peer-assistant mechanisms and evaluation structures, forged networks of exchange between writers and resources, and provided practitioners with transferable skills and options for alternative mainstream lives—in short, it has all key elements of networked learning.

The formation, adaptation, mutation, and dissemination of signature graffiti are indissolubly interlinked with the ways writers communicate with each other. Historically, for graffitists, means of circulating and critiquing their work are crucial. Since the 1960s, the channels through which graffiti has been transmitted, and thus perceived and judged, have radically changed: from walls and trains, to independent zines and more recently to the Web; from physical, through analog, to digital. Graffiti is no longer perceived only where it is actually produced: its audience is increasingly neither the neighborhood nor the city, but the world. This change affects graffiti evaluation, learning, and production since, as Lachlan MacDowall notes, "practitioners adapt to the increasing circulation of images" (2008, p. 138).

Graffiti has inspired a rich and varied academic body of literature from a number of disciplines such as urban studies, art history, criminology, and anthropology. However, this study considers only insights that pay attention to the relationship of graffiti and its media (Austin, 2001; Iveson, 2007; Snyder, 2009), graffiti's learning potentials (Christen, 2003; Rahn, 2002; Valle & Weiss, 2010) and its recent association with the Internet (Bowen, 2010; MacDowall, 2008). Apart from the graffiti literature, the special and constantly evolving relationship between learning, technology, and people in a subcultural context is also noted by Iain Borden (2001) in his research on skateboarding, and comprises the theoretical core of Jeffrey L. Kidder's (2012) recent study on parkour.

In this study we understand graffiti writing as a materially dependant mark of one's presence (Chmielewska, 2007), as digitally archived and constantly flowing information (Bowen, 2010; Pennycook, 2010) and as a subcultural practice (Lachmann, 1988; MacDonald, 2001). Unlike several new subcultures which emerged and evolved along with the Internet and understand it as their cultural context, in the case of graffiti, the Internet, as Andy Bennett suggests, "is conceptualized as a cultural resource appropriated within a preexisting cultural context, and used as a means of engaging symbolically with and/or negotiating that context" (2004, p. 165).

This chapter explores the extension of the graffiti field, whether enabled or facilitated by the new technological capacities, and the educational implications that this widening may entail. Particular emphasis is given on how technological advancements influence writers' interactions, mediations, and spatialities: from the traditional apprenticeship to the virtual interaction, from the wall and train surfaces to the websites, and from the spatial–temporal dislocation of the Internet back to the locality and materiality of the city. We focus on the three domains through which writers communicate and concurrently are educated: their interpersonal interactions, the graffiti media, and the city. In each of these three domains, we interrogate how the transition from the physical and localized to the digital and globalized changes writers' subcultural, as well as transferable, skills.

This study is based on the assumption that graffiti largely depends on, and concurrently challenges, what materiality, technology, and culture can afford in a particular spatial and temporal context. These elements impose different restrictions and open up possibilities that, to a great extent, designate both the setting and the extension of graffiti milieu. The aim of this chapter is to show how this expansion, in the light of the pervasive presence of the Internet, affects the way writers communicate with and learn from each other in a subcultural context, that, in turn, transforms how practitioners view and engage with their immediate material and social reality.

Writing Graffiti

Expanding the Writing Field: The "Graffscape"

The graffiti field is a setting in which writers are positioned hierarchically. This positioning is both based on and governed by the subcultural rules and evaluation criteria. Entering this world implicitly means accepting its "laws," working hard, and investing time and effort to build a "subcultural career" is expected (Lachmann, 1988). Graffiti's competitive environment and the possibility of gaining fame motivated writers to develop innovative artistic forms and led them to expand their field.

Nancy MacDonald argues that "to earn fame you need an audience": the wider, the better (2001, p. 83). Even though writers publicly address their messages, their intended audience is no other than the graffiti community. According to Kurt Iveson, graffiti should not be considered as a "private address," since graffitists, as they write their signatures, do not draw a dividing line between desired and wider audiences (2007, p. 144). To address and form the widest public possible, graffitists are "getting up," that is, spreading one's name in the city by utilizing walls as their communication venue. Unsurprisingly they also started appropriating New York's subway

system to reach a public that is geographically dispersed. Joe Austin notes that in doing so, the underground system has been gradually transformed into an unofficial network through which writers "could 'broadcast' their work all across the city" (1996, p. 276). The keyword here is "broadcast." The way in which the message is broadcast, the surface of transmission (e.g., wall, train, photograph, screen), not only designates the audience and dictates the perception of the message, but also represents the medium to extend the field.

Graffiti are vulnerable and ephemeral by nature: they depend on documentation. For writers, photography is one of the most popular ways to record their feats before being damaged or erased, and, as Ella Chmielewska argues, graffiti "needs photography as a medium for 'getting up'" (2009, p. 273). Moreover, writers' work also depends on its circulation. This transition from the wall and the train to the photographic surface marks a brand new era for graffiti, since these pictures are included in magazines or other media and travel throughout the world.

Jeff Ferrell emphasizes the determinant role that the media representations played in the transformation and dissemination of graffiti subculture when he notes that "many writers became aware of and interested in graffiti not only through direct exposure to the works" of others, but "through mediated visions of graffiti elsewhere" (1996, p. 43). Moreover, hip-hop becomes the vehicle through which writing culture is broadcast around the world, by appearing on rap album covers and video clips (cf. Austin, 2001, p. 202). For instance, the first exposure to graffiti for the would-be Greek writers comes from the mass media and hip-hop. As Dee 71 (2011), a veteran Greek writer, notes:

> It was through break dancing that I started getting engaged with hip-hop in 1984. It was through hip-hop and some films, magazines and photographs (which were mainly concerned with break dancing) that graffiti captured my attention. The most intense feeling though came from the film *Beat Street* and through a booklet which included a text on the elements and culture of hip-hop.

For Dee 71 it was hip-hop culture that provided the possibility of a new life. Moreover, some books and films that featured graffiti attracted his attention. The books *Subway Art* and *Spraycan Art*, published in 1984 and 1987, respectively, as well as the films *Wild Style* (1983), *Style Wars* (1983), and *Beat Street* (1984), proved to be extremely influential in the circulation of graffiti beyond the US borders. The significance of films in the dissemination of graffiti is also underscored by Jason (2012), one of the most prolific graffiti writers in Greece. He recalls:

> I started graffiti in 1991. The first pieces were done at the SKRA square, an area in Kalamaria (Thessaloniki, Greece). It totally came out of the blue when I first saw STYLE WARS in ET1 national channel. Generally, I got early in the HIP-HOP scene due to break dancing.

Technological advancements allowed writers not only to disseminate their culture and expand their field, but also made the emergence of local scenes possible. The proliferation of graffiti in Greece could be seen as an example of what Arjun Appadurai (1996) calls "global ethnoscapes." Appadurai's work focuses on the "five dimensions of global cultural flow." These five "scapes"—the ethnoscapes, technoscapes, mediascapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes—refer to flows of people, technology,

information, capital, and ideas, respectively (1996, pp. 33–36). In graffiti, all the channels of transmission and communication, both physical (walls, trains, etc.) and mediated (independent zines and commercial publications, or online platforms and films), gave birth to a writing "scape" in its own right—the "graffscape," as Alastair Pennycook terms it (2010). The graffscape is the field in and through which writers' communication exchanges take place. The physical locations in the city and their various mediated reproductions mutually form the field of graffitists' exposure. "To talk of graffscapes," Pennycook argues, is to understand graffiti "not as immobile text on static city walls" but rather as constantly flowing and in motion information (2010, p. 144). It is not only the writers that travel through the city to write their names; their documented pieces travel by themselves through the media and the Web. Technology played a reflective role in the formation and expansion of the graffscape and radically changed writers' worldview, "as did their goals—from all-city to all-world" (Snyder, 2006, p. 94).

Extending the Learning Field: The Graffiti "Learnscape"

Graffitists are critical of schooling within dominant cultural institutions where learning is motivated by grades, a sense of antagonism is cultivated, and team working is not really encouraged. Instead, they genuinely choose, and therefore value, to learn outside the standardized controls of evaluative systems through their own "peer-review" structure, to collaborate with each other, and compete to achieve mastery. Writers gradually become aware of the transformative potentials of experiencing, learning, and evaluating processes through their active participation in the graffiti world. Graffitists absorb valuable habits, such as showing respect or working hard to improve, cultivate critical ways of thinking and modes of conduct, and acquire or further develop various transferable creative and managerial skills.

In the groundbreaking book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Paulo Freire proposes a concept of learning radically different from the dominant "banking model." Freire strongly opposes sterile and uncritical educational procedures for both teacher and student, during which the teacher acts as the "depositor" or "narrator" of knowledge and the student as the passive "depository" or "container" (1970/2005, pp. 71–72). Instead, he suggests an approach that is based on the reciprocal engagement of both student and teacher in the production of knowledge and meaning that also critically encounters the world beyond the educational setting. This approach regards both the student and the teacher as incomplete, and does not privilege the teacher as the knowledgeable, powerful, and unquestioned subject. On the contrary, for him knowledge emerges only with the "restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (1970/2005, p. 72). The Freirean concept of education counter-proposes a different relationship between student–teacher dyad and society at large: one that cultivates a conscious and critical understanding of the person and the world. Freire's pedagogy is based on terms such as "critical consciousness" and "conscientization," which include the

process of consciousness raising, questioning the social and political power relations, and challenging the taken-for-granted situations in educational, social, cultural, and urban levels. The graffiti field, as we will see, seems to facilitate these ideals of critical pedagogy to blossom.

Ivan Illich, in his seminal book *Deschooling Society* (1971/1999), challenges institutionalized learning and prompts us to shift our focus from "educational funnels" on "learning webs," as he terms them (1971/1999, p. xx). Illich believes that a new model that creates networks of learning is needed in order to provide resource access to those wishing to learn, encourage those who want to share their knowledge, and give opportunities to those who seek to present an issue publicly (1971/1999, p. 76). In a sense, graffiti seems to substantiate this potential. In a striking fashion for 1971, Illich suggests that the use of advanced technologies could play a decisive role in creating and sustaining "learning webs" with peers and the like (1971/1999, pp. 72–104). Illich is aware of the dangers embedded in technology and discusses the need for "tools for conviviality" (1973/2001). Illich's "tools" promise openness to human expression and allow utilization and reconfiguration according to various needs. His concepts anticipate, to a great extent, the Internet's contemporary various possibilities for interaction and learning (e.g., archives, fora). For Illich, people and technologies creatively interweave to form a learning environment beyond the traditional institutionalized way of thinking, operating, and evaluating. Graffiti, by its marginal position, is an interesting example of how communication and noninstitutional learning are bound up with technology and people.

Illich's webs of learning have set the foundations for the more contemporary concept of "networked learning." Networked learning has been defined as the "learning in which information and communication technology is used to promote connections: between one learner and other learners, between learners and tutors; between a learning community and its learning resources" (Jones & Steeples, 2002, p. 2; Goodyear, Banks, Hodgson, & McConnell, 2004, p. 1). Simply put, networked learning is the process of forging connections between people and information in such a way that either enable or facilitate learning. The key element in this definition, as Peter Goodyear asserts (2005), is "connectedness." Networked learning should be distinguished from distance learning, as it can include physical interactions and exchanges as well. In our view, it is a learning process that results from the use of networked technologies, digital or otherwise. Networked learning is by definition a relational concept, in that it brings together learning subjects, whether learners or teachers, and learning resources. The emphasis of the concept should be put on learning and connection that technological advancements allow rather than on technology per se. Neither online material nor technologically enhanced communication is enough to properly define the term. As Goodyear et al. argue, "the use of online materials is not a sufficient characteristic to define networked learning. Human–human interaction is an essential part of networked learning" (2004, p. 2).

Prominent scholars of the field have identified some limitations in this very first, yet surprisingly persistent, definition of networked learning. For instance, it has been recently argued that "the principle not emphasized in this early definition, but which was always present and has become to be seen as an important and integral

aspect of networked learning, is the one of collaboration" (McConnell, Hodgson, & Dirckinck-Holmfeld, 2012, p. 7). Networked learning is often considered to be part of institutionalized learning, thus risking to exclude the valuable learning happening in nonformal everyday practices outside of deliberately designed educational settings. Steve Fox believes that this kind of framing favors "educationalization" and neglects the learning that occurs within or emerges from communities whose purpose is not primarily educational (2001, p. 77).

Learning, as understood here, is a much wider and encompassing notion than education. Education is traditionally associated with the imparting of knowledge and skills through teaching and is seen as something that lasts for a finite time, often taking place during a socially prescribed period of the life of an individual. Further, it is considered to be a formal process of knowledge and value transfer, typically happening within institutions by individuals that are in more powerful position than the learners, and which often leads to a degree or certificate of some sort. On the contrary, learning is usually understood as considerably less formal, bureaucratic, and institutionalized. It is thought as an ongoing, experiential, and self-motivated process of knowledge, value, and skill acquisition. Fox has used an interesting metaphor to illustrate the difference between education and learning. He suggests that formal education is just "the visible tip of a learning iceberg" (2001, p. 81). This means that learning is multifaceted and cannot, or rather should not, be limited to institutions or instructional environments only. Extending Fox's metaphor, it can be argued that the "invisible" part of the iceberg that lies in the deep sea is the pervasive everyday and informal learning taking place in various settings and/or instances. This does not mean, however, that learning is an informal and self-driven process of acquiring knowledge while education is formal and taught. Rather, learning might include teaching or happen within an institution, but it should not be limited to these instances only. Learning may occur in everyday activities or teaching can occasionally happen between people who consider themselves members of a community. In other words, education and learning might be better thought in terms of intentions and settings.

To learn means to benefit from and become transformed by the whole experience and process. Self-motivation and the freedom to choose what and how to learn make graffitists think critically of dominant institutional learning, where students are obliged to learn things that might not be of immediate interest. Contrary, in graffiti scene "learner" and "teacher" share a common ground, i.e., the practice of public writing. They reciprocally educate each other and collaborate to mutually define their learning "material" according to their personal or community needs. Then, graffiti, by its peer-assisted and self-directed learning structures, can be considered as a valuable and creative learning alternative and might give insights on how learning can take place outside institutional settings.

During the graffiti learning process, writers develop new skills, modify their existing talents, and/or further cultivate their inclinations. At the same time they acquire values and adopt behaviors that permanently change the way they think and act outside the graffiti world. Of course, graffitists' learning is not always innocent or positive. For example, writers are encouraged to take illegal actions; the riskier the better. On several occasions, the graffitists end up with a criminal record and are

stigmatized for the rest of their lives. Even more tragically, in an attempt to fulfill their subcultural "duties," some writers have lost their lives. The fact that graffiti is male-dominated leads MacDonald to note that writers receive negative gender lessons, embedded in the culture's emphasis on masculinity (2001, pp. 94–150).

In graffiti, the field of operation, representation, skill demonstration, and prestige circulation converge with that of learning: the graffscape is also writers' "learnscape." Graffiti pieces and their representations not only provide status to their producers but also become learning resources for other writers; graffitists' interactions not only show knowledge, but also inform and instruct. In other words, graffiti learnscape consists of a network of places, people, technologies, and pieces (whether mediatized or physical). In this study, graffiti is seen as a widespread, yet fortified, networked community in which, although not deliberately designed to serve this role, learning happens in a number of occasions. Here, in the context of signature graffiti subculture, networked learning is understood as a process of noninstitutional and informal learning which happens in the interpersonal interactions between like-minded peers as well as during their production and encounter of subculturally important learning resources. It is characterized by collaboration and connectedness among graffitists, and is motivated by their shared interests. It is neither seen as a merely self-directed resource-based processing model of learning, nor as technologically enhanced apprenticeship. Rather, it is thought as a community-based learning that not only relates resources and people, but also uses communication technologies in such a way that people and resources are interwoven and fused to an extent that one cannot make clear the definition of the one without the other.

Graffiti learning is a combination of self-directed learning and peer assistance: it is based on the instructional properties of the available resources, the interaction between writers and the actual practice *in situ*. Then, the graffscape can be divided into three distinctive, yet closely interrelated and often overlapping, learning, and at the same time, communicational domains: the media, the interaction between graffitists, and the city. It is to these three domains that we now turn.

Graffiti Media

Mediatized "Getting Up": From Zine Design to Profile Management

Graffiti writers are devoted fame hunters; being "all-city" and "getting up" is their primary concern. Even for those who produce works legally, and whose main purpose is not to "get up," fame remains an underlying motivation: they want their pieces seen and evaluated. This is why graffitists appropriated the subway surfaces in the first place. As the number of writers grew, the need to exchange material and reach geographically dispersed audiences gave rise to zines and magazines. As Gregory Snyder asserts, this type of independent media "often comes after the creation of the

subcultural form, and in many ways expands the reach of the subculture beyond geographic and physical space … They do not create a subculture so much as document and disseminate it to other of its members" (2006, p. 96). These media served the needs of the subculture (e.g., information exchange, "getting up") and in the process became extraordinarily influential. The requirements to produce this kind of media though, such as finding resources, categorizing them, and synthesizing them into a meaningful design, lead writers to develop graphic design, photo editing, and marketing skills. Graffitists also had to forge a strong network of trustworthy peers, as most of the zines, especially in the early years of graffiti, were distributed hand-by-hand.

"If graffiti includes the desire to make oneself known across a range of geographical areas," Tracey Bowen argues, "the Internet, then, has multiplied this opportunity to include places and spaces beyond an accessible, physical locale" (2010, p. 86). In 1994 Susan Farrell created the first graffiti website, provocatively called *Art Crimes*, which operated as a global visual inventory of pieces. The Internet has dramatically changed with Web 2.0 technologies which allow users whole new possibilities, including participation in social networking platforms, blogs, video-sharing sites, and so on, which are instantly embraced by the graffiti community. All these platforms became the channels through which writers broadcast their works, acquire reputation, and demonstrate their skills.

Compared to still images, videos are perhaps the most accurate way for writers to capture the process of their performance. By manipulating duration and sound, writers are able to enrich the mode in which they demonstrate their activity, and show their technical skills, or daring, or both. For example, videos that show legal writing are focused on the piece and graffitist's hands: they are always shot in daylight; the camera is mainly stable and captures solely the wall. Quite often, the camera follows the movement of the writer's hand while drawing a line or executing a difficult color effect detail. Writers' outfit is not dissimilar to what an artist would wear in the studio, and these videos are usually accompanied by more chilled rap music. The attention here is on the detail, technique, and mastery.

In contrast, in films with illegal content, the focus is on the action per se. The scene is taped exclusively during the night and the camera is usually in a "dizzy" motion. Here, the surroundings play an important role and thus are captured. Writers are presented as outlaws and vandals wearing full face masks and hoodies, while the physical sounds are utilized as an inseparable part of the adventurous atmosphere (e.g., writers' steps in a silent underground tunnel, the shouts of guards who run after them). In films with illegal content, focus is on excitement and speed. During the representation of their activity, writers learn that the way they document, edit, direct, and finally present their process and progress is crucial. This is also important in many creative mainstream disciplines.

Digital media "transformed the prestige system of writing culture" in a similar way to zines a couple of years earlier (Austin, 2001, p. 260). As opposed to zines, in Internet platforms there are no editorial interventions by third parties, the reached audience is dispersed globally rather than locally, and the message is instant, multimodal, and interactive in nature. In the past, zine editors had the "powerful role of arbiter," and

fame had more to do with "who a writer knows than his or her talent" (Austin, 2001, p. 260). This has learning implications as well, since now the writing knowledge ceases to be monopolistic, i.e., deriving its power from singular and privileged sources, and becomes available to all through the Web.

Writers today can bypass "middlemen," and are more independent in presenting their work: graffiti is more decentralized. Moreover, graffitists can earn global notoriety without leaving their hometown: writing has become de-territorialized. The instantaneity of the Internet not only helps writers to establish a quick and global reputation, but also to "spread the word about new trends in writing culture" (Austin, 2001, p. 259). It follows the dynamic of graffiti evolution and is literally up-to-date. Further, the multimodality and interactivity of the Web provide the means for graffitists to demonstrate themselves in the ways they wish, to choose the best mode to promote their work, and select not only what, but also how to show it.

Graffitists regulate the information they broadcast through the Web; they manage their online profiles to represent themselves and their work as they like. Committed writers meticulously collect, carefully organize, and eventually upload and present their evidential objects. This record of feats, by the way of a virtual portfolio, constructs the representation of their subcultural identities. The way Jason manages his profile in the *Streetfiles.org* graffiti photo-sharing platform is illustrative. Letters and characters, new and old, legal and illegal, personal and collaborative pieces, along with walls, trains and sketches, photos from yards and graffiti jams, poses in front of completed pieces and in action photos, links to his blog and *YouTube* videos—all coexist in a delicate balance. His 221 uploaded photos are not accidentally chosen; every single flick is meticulously selected, not only to convey specific subcultural meanings, but also to confirm that Jason is an old school, prolific, hard-working, and skilled writer, a graffiti master.

But it is not just his pieces and the images per se; the captions and titles he uses are also carefully chosen. For example, "double trouble" and "business as usual" accompany photos depicting Jason along with his mate Caze, while "writing history" is the caption under the flick of the first triple whole car ever executed in Greece. The message is not the piece itself, but is constituted by the image-caption interplay: the viewer is skillfully directed to receive not only the visual but also the latent cultural message. Jason is a master writer, and knows not only how to prove it offline, but also to communicate it online. Through their constant engagement with Web profile management, writers acquire another valuable transferable skill for their mainstream careers.

The need for mediatized "getting up," information circulation, and reporting from the streets, coupled with the need for specialized graffiti products, gave rise to a self-sufficient industry within which writers have the opportunity to follow alternative careers (cf. Snyder, 2012, p. 307). For example, it is not accidental that the owners of several spray-paint manufacturing firms and the vast majority of graffiti shops in Greece are either former or active writers. Other graffitists channel their acquired skills in creative disciplines, such as photography, graphic and web design, tattoo design, architecture, advertisement, fine arts, or any other field where design and visual communication play a determinant role. In many cases, the participation in graffiti helps

young people to bring to the surface their creative inclinations; the writing environment is the first field where they practice their talents, get feedback, and confirmation of their abilities. The active engagement with this subculture not only helps young people to acquire a variety of transferable skills, but also opens up possibilities for alternative mainstream careers "where sometimes none existed" (Snyder, 2012, p. 314).

Online Visual Repositories: Scrutinizing and Learning

In a similar fashion to sketchbooks and zines, the Internet "provided a new teaching mechanism to writers. This teaching process differed from the face-to-face contact between apprentices and masters, but it was no less collective" (Austin, 2001, p. 260). The archive that writers create as they share their feats on the Web serves as an important stimulus for all the practitioners. The pictures become "a learning tool, allowing writers to scrutinize and study their own work as well as the work of others" (Snyder, 2006, p. 94). Writers identify those graffitists with a style that matches their tastes, compare their pieces, understand their "mistakes" and evolve. Further, they often take advantage of the possibilities that contemporary communication and information technologies afford so as to connect, discuss, and exchange ideas and material with like-minded peers, engaging this way in a subculturally meaningful learning process.

Videos are also valuable learning materials because, compared to the flicks, they usually capture various stages of writing: from the beginning to the final product. For example, in legal videos one can learn the stages of writing and some basic techniques of execution (e.g., first goes the sketch, later the fill in and the background, and finally the outlines). In videos with illicit writing, one can learn how to enter a train yard (e.g., tools needed to cut a fence, outfit to protect identity), and how to escape when something goes wrong. In a sense, photographs bear stylistic instructional properties while videos are more technical.

In graffiti subculture, those who do not "know their roots" are looked down upon. This knowledge used to pass from one generation to the other through narrations of older writers and through occasional photo trading. Graffitists, throughout the years, selected and documented what was noteworthy: their pieces. In doing so though, they captured the temporality of specific places. A relevant and oft-cited example is the *Graffiti Archaeology* project (cf. Bowen, 2010, p. 86; MacDowall, 2008, p. 141). This website captures the way graffiti changes over time in specific places in various US cities, and opens opportunities to study how graffiti evolves in particular walls.

Graffiti in Xanthi.gr, a documentation website from a provincial city in Greece, opens a similar window into the past of specific walls that have special meaning for the local graffiti scene. It is also a platform through which one can draw both inspiration and conclusions, either aesthetic or historic: which names and crews last, who was influenced by whom, how local spots evolved over the years. In reading the sequence of photographs from specific spots, writers reconstruct the history of the wall and extract meanings that are of interest to them. By emphasizing the connections between writing history and new developments, digitally distributed graffiti

help writers to understand that the future possibilities of writing in their home cities depend on maintaining links to the past of the local scene.

The online graffiti material constitutes an archive that maintains the historical perspective of writing culture and provides graffitists, as well as researchers, with an effective educational apparatus. Similar objectives have led to the research program *Digitizing Photographs of Graffiti Art in Athens and Thessaloniki*, organized by the *Byzantine Literature and Folklore Department* at the *National & Kapodistrian University of Athens*, under the supervision of Prof. M. A. Alexiadis. This website focuses on data content standards for descriptive cataloguing called the *Categories for the Description of Works of Art* (CDWA). Due to graffiti's ephemeral nature, the creation of this online graffiti archive was intended to meet the needs of various interested communities, such as libraries, museums, archival and visual resources professionals. The main differences of the institutional and subcultural publicly available portals are the creators and their intended audiences; writers usually strongly support the insider initiatives, but they do not disregard those of the outsiders.

For graffitists, online repositories are learning resources. Like autodidacts, writers become responsible for their learning: they are transformed into "self-teachers" and take control of their learning. In doing so, they build confidence and become critical of the concept of teacher as authority figure. Writers spend a great deal of time scrutinizing the available learning material in order to decipher not only the stylistic qualities of a piece but also how it is positioned on the wall and represented in the photographic frame. They go through countless pages of paper trying to understand how to shape complex letters and characters, give their design perspective and depth, or combine colors in an aesthetically pleasant or innovative way. This self-directed learning is supplemented by occasional or regular interactions between graffitists, where they discuss each other's progress and outcomes, providing feedback and/or criticism.

In a sense, through dedicated websites, writers not only acquire knowledge of the local graffiti history, but also become aware of how the very process of documentation and dissemination affects their practice. They are trained to attach specific meanings to specific places, and learn that meaning is constructed in a historical perspective and emerges from a cultural, spatial, and temporal context. In the hands of writers, the various online platforms become "learning webs" and "convivial tools," radically changing the way the community forms its culture and graffitists shape their identities. Today, *YouTube* tutorials extend apprenticeship; personal blogs replace the traditional sketchbooks, and the Internet becomes the new subway system through which pieces circulate and fame is conferred.

The Educational Role of Documentation: Manipulating Graffiti Flicks

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996) address the significant role played by the materiality of inscription. They argue that the surfaces, substances, and tools used in inscriptions are of great importance because each "contributes to the meaning of the text in its own particular way" (1996, p. 231). They also believe that inscriptions are highly dependent upon technology as the latter defines their visual impact and perception. Kress and van Leeuwen identify three types of inscription technologies: the technologies of the hand (e.g., painting); the technologies of recording, or analog technologies (e.g., photography); and the digital synthesizing technologies (e.g., computer interfaces) (1996, p. 233). Writers no longer view graffiti on the actual surfaces on which they were produced, but increasingly through different surfaces (e.g., photographs or computer screens). In a sense, graffiti is produced by human hand, then recorded using analog techniques, and then digitally distributed and perceived. In short, graffiti is initially produced in an inscription mode which is radically different from the mode of reception.

Every inscription technology imposes restrictions and entails different treatments in order to communicate the message effectively: it designates not only the way graffiti is produced but also determines how it is received. Let's take the example of photography, since it is the most prevalent mode of recording and communication in the writing community. The key role of documentation and recording has of course its historical antecedents in the 1960s and 1970s, when the ephemerality of performance, body art, and the inaccessibility of land art required media such as film or still photography. Several artists combined the role of photography and video as recording devices with their inherent aesthetic values, transforming them to "essential components of the work itself" (Elwes, 2005, p. 10)—and that is quite similar to what graffitists do today.

Writers prefer to capture their work photographically in front view; in daylight for legal pieces and night light for illegal pieces. Due to graffiti's ephemeral nature, this seems to be a necessity, which means taking the picture right after its execution and before the piece is damaged or erased. But there is also an intention behind that. Photography is a bracketing of a larger scene: it is an editorial device. Through their pictures, writers narrate their experiences and dress their representations with atmosphere. For instance, graffitists would include snow in their images to give a sense of the difficulties they faced during the execution of the piece (Fig. 7.1). Furthermore, they would probably include in the photographic frame a part of the larger scene in order to indicate that the spot is central (e.g., cars passing by), difficult and risky to reach (e.g., exterior ladders which indicate that there is no alternative way out), or a place where nobody would ever expect to encounter graffiti (e.g., under a bridge in the middle of nowhere). But is it a central and risky spot or not? It may look risky, but in reality it may not be.

Graffiti is increasingly becoming representation-based, and writers rely on and invest subcultural meaning in images: representations shape their beliefs, and their distribution determines writers' physical practice. The evidential status of the photographic picture can be challenged by easily available image manipulation software. Writers often use similar software to make their pieces look better (e.g., adjust brightness levels), to correct mistakes (e.g., erase a dripping), or to remove any undesired elements from the image (e.g., another tag or an urban element that reveals scale). During their constant engagement with representations, writers become aware of the rhetoric and devious power of images, and thus become critical, or at least suspicious, of the techniques adopted from the mass media.



Fig. 7.1 "Botsi Snow." Graffiti piece by Jason at Botsi district, Thessaloniki, Greece, 1999. Artist: © Jason. Photo: Courtesy Jason

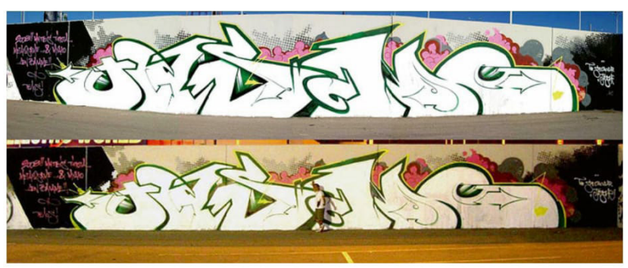

Fig. 7.2 "Jason … and everything changes." Graffiti piece at IKEA, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2008. Jason, in the online caption that accompanies his photo, paraphrases the Greek advertisement slogan of IKEA. He poses in front of the wall to give the viewer a sense of the massive scale of his piece. Artist: © Jason. Photos: Courtesy Jason

Writers frequently crop their images to fit only their pieces, and often experiment with various photographic angles to make their work look bigger. In actual large-scale works, however, graffitists pose next to their pieces so as to help the viewer to understand the scale (Fig. 7.2). Moreover, writers increasingly learn and utilize specialized shooting techniques, such as high-dynamic-range imaging. Also, they employ light painting, that is a photographic technique in which the movement of a light source is captured in a long exposure imaging, or make use of new graffiti products, such as the "night glow" luminescent paint, so as to create visually compelling representations of their pieces. The fancy results are later uploaded to

various websites where they are judged, not only for the depicted pieces, but also for the manipulation.

Graffitists always come back to the spot to make sure that they have taken the "proper" photograph. They may have taken a flick after completion of a piece, but it is very common to go back to the scene and wait for the right picture and/or frame: writers direct and manage their representations. The position of the graffiti writer Ints (2012) is indicative of "what really matters":

> What I do not like in trainbombing is the fact that it is very difficult to photograph your piece properly. In contrast, streetbombing provides you with the opportunity to visit the spot the next day and take the right picture of your piece which, after all, is what really matters...

Writers learn to exploit opportunities offered by still and moving images, and they manipulate compositional and rhetorical power of images in order to convey certain meanings. To achieve that, except for the images focusing on pieces, writers themselves become "models." For instance, in a photograph, exceptionally contrived and full of subcultural symbolism, Jason (foreground) and Caze (background) pose in front of their pieces (Fig. 7.3). Their outfits and posturing are far from innocent. Their pants and shirts are covered in paint and both wear masks and old school b-boy-like *Adidas* shoes. Their dirty outfits attest that they write frequently, and particular shoes show their affiliation with hip-hop. Their masks serve a double role: they conceal faces and at the same time refer to the tension of the newly completed writing.

Jason demonstrates various used caps, referring to the variety of lines he executed, while the evidence of his fingers full of paint shows that he was actually painting minutes before the shoot. Caze holds one spray can in each hand while his fingers are on the caps. He is looking directly at the camera with an aggressive body



Fig. 7.3 "OLDskoolSALONICANS: the Salonicans old skool finest." Jason and Caze posing in front of their pieces. Thessaloniki, Greece, 2010. Artists: © Jason, Caze. Photo: Courtesy Jason

posture, as if he has just stopped writing, and is ready to start again. Except for the caps, sepia effect is applied to the photograph, and, should we look carefully, we see that the background is intentionally blurred. Nonetheless, the flick partially reveals its context, leaving visible some characteristics of the place in the background. Those who are familiar with the Greek graffiti scene can recognize that Jason and Caze are at Kalamaria's "Wall of Fame," a historically and subculturally charged wall in Salonika City. The title also helps the viewer to receive the desirable meaning of the message: "OLDskoolSALONICANS—the Salonicans old skool finest." They are old school, they dress and behave as such, and they are from Salonika: all we need to do to confirm that is pay attention to the background of the image, and the wordplay between Salonika-spray cans in the title.

A close reading reveals nuances of meaning in the way writers represent themselves and their works. Should we consider that graffiti subculture is dependent on these transactions and communicative exchanges, then the way writers represent and distribute their pieces is determinant. This is why graffitists either adopt or develop techniques in order to represent their works in the best possible ways: they learn to exploit what different inscription technologies afford. This has altered the way they think of physical space, act in virtual space, and perform in both realities. This has an enormous impact on writers' worldview: it changed the way they understand and operate both in their subcultural field and social milieu. In the process, graffitists are mastering visual communication techniques and transforming technological constraints into opportunities. Writers invent, or further develop, existing strategies, such as deploying the image–text relationship, writing powerful captions-slogans or manipulating the rhetorical power of images in order to target their audiences and communicate their messages efficiently. This is a dual lesson: writers learn how to cope with and decipher the increasingly image-mediated world, and at the same time are equipped to pitch their work and themselves visually.

Graffiti Interactions

"Old School" Interactions: Apprenticeship and Crews

Richard Christen argues that "the mentor-apprentice relationship is the primary way that young writers have learned their craft over the last decades" (2003, p. 65). Through the mentoring system, aesthetic principles, subcultural values, technical skills, and style are handed down from one generation to the next (Avramidis & Drakopoulou, 2012, p. 333). This process usually takes place within crews, which, although originally organized to support painting and dispense technical skills, over the years became complex social and educational arenas. Three main factors made apprenticeship and collaboration amongst writers an integral part of graffiti subculture: graffiti's competitive environment, its sophisticated style and difficult execution, and its illicit nature.

During apprenticeship, either within crews or with a mentor, novice writers learn how and what to observe in other graffiti: style, execution, color combinations, etc. Perhaps one of the most popular and significant procedures that every writer undergoes throughout the apprenticeship is the discussion on subjects related to the practice, history, and values of the subculture (cf. Valle & Weiss, 2010, pp. 129–131). During these conversations, "the criteria of evaluation are created" (Valle & Weiss, 2010, p. 131). Thereby, beginner writers "become aware of how graffiti is evaluated and fame is conferred by audiences" (Avramidis & Drakopoulou, 2012, p. 332). These criteria are of great importance as they train writer's vision in important elements of practice such as seeking difficult-to-access locations, paying attention to details related to execution and material and so forth. Apart from technical matters, graffitists learn what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in graffiti subculture. For example, "biting," meaning copying others' style, or "crossing," namely overwriting other writers' pieces.

Most of this knowledge, which at least in the formative years of graffiti is unavailable elsewhere, is acquired by neophytes through occasional contact with more experienced writers, trial and error, or direct instruction in a crew (Avramidis & Drakopoulou, 2012, p. 333). Crews, most of the time, are geographically localized group formations. This allows crew members to meet on a regular basis. They also forge strong friendships, interpersonal trust, and develop a unique sense of support, reciprocity, and commitment to each other. Crews operate like families—they prepare members for confronting the difficulties and opportunities of society, in this case the graffiti field.

Crew members, whether experienced or not, perform in turns the role of the teacher and the role of the student. In the process they reconfigure the traditional institutional perception of the student–teacher relationship, where the teacher is the active agent and the students are the passive recipients (Freire, 1970/2005, p. 72). Graffitists challenge the "banking" model of learning as described by Freire (1970/2005), and they learn to think critically of their educational position. In a sense, the learning procedure that writers undergo, although paradoxical when one considers the hierarchical stratification in the graffiti world, seems to reject the "teacher–student contradiction" and to substantiate the Freirean concept of education, whereby individuals must be "simultaneously teachers and students" (1970/2005, p. 72).

The setting in and during which learning happens is important. It is different to participate in a learning situation in a school, where the teacher is often positioned opposite to the learners due to the classroom's arrangement, compared to a wall in the street, where graffitists paint side by side. The spatial correlations in both cases deserve attention. In the former case there is a situation of power while in the latter less so, as learning stems primarily from collaboration and common interests. The context of any learning situation matters.

Writers who paint together are equal: they learn from and teach each other in turn. In front of a wall, or rather in the graffiti community in general, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and age do not count—only mastery and commitment are important. It does not matter who writers may be in their real lives. After all, writers enter this field with another, self-invented identity. By inventing and putting into public circulation

new names, graffitists are able to create new links with their everyday identities and new connections between their past and present. In graffiti, writers are evaluated for their attitude and performance within the community, solely based on this new "persona." They are freed from any everyday societal conventions or limits, and can shape their new identities as they wish. Graffitists invest a great deal of time in finding unique and characteristic names because it is through this signature that one is presented in the community. Some of these names reveal personal information (e.g., neighborhood, birth date) while others attempt to sound aggressive or artistic. There is a very special relationship between fame, anonymity, and identity in graffiti subculture: one may be legendary but practically unknown. In a sense, graffiti self-naming provides similar opportunities with that of the Internet; in both cases "anonymity" is utilized for a purpose.

Another common practice in graffiti, which underlines the importance of network and learning happening within the community, is the sketch and piece exchange, i.e., the process when a graffitist writes another writer's name with his or her own style. This kind of exchange is utilized not only to show respect for a writer or to demonstrate one's skills, but also to provide new ideas to the participating graffitists and the community as a whole. An exchange is considered complete only when both writers produce a sketch or a piece for each other. Online platforms, such as *Greek Exchange.tumblr.com*, facilitate and publicly disseminate these exchanges, while motivating practitioners to either participate or further connect and collaborate. These websites enhance and accelerate the exchange procedure and make public a practice that has its roots in the formative years of contemporary graffiti.

Back in the day, novice writers, let alone those from provincial cities, used to forge exchange networks with more experienced graffitists, who were usually located in big cities, so as to learn their craft. They would send letters including photographs and sketches, and then, the experienced writer would return them with comments and further sketches. Quite often was the, rather outdated nowadays, technique of partially coping the sketch, using a carbon paper, and then intervening to another writer's style in order to make it more stylistically sophisticated or delicate. In a sense, graffitists were engaged in a "distance apprenticeship" of some sort. This practice of not only assisting in the development of another writer's personal style, the most intimate feature of a graffitist's identity and work, but literally evolving it together with the writer, shows emphatically how close the collaboration amongst writers might become and how deeply engaged and committed can graffitists be in their own learning setting.

Assistance, collaboration, and cooperation do not take place only between experienced and novice writers, or among members of the same crew. In fact, master writers share their innovative techniques with other experienced writers and work together in common themes. In collaborative graffiti productions, whether legal or not, graffitists share features so as to make the pieces more stylistically "consistent" (e.g., one paints in the piece of the other, or one draws the all outlines with a particular technique). All the aforementioned show the, cultivated through constant learning, collaborative spirit of graffitists.

Online Interactivity: Feedback and Evaluation

Crews' significance as educational and informational arenas has radically changed since the emergence of the Internet. Today's websites are not static repositories of images that allow only passive observation. Instead, they include fora or allow messages, comments, and chatting, thus facilitating synchronous and/or asynchronous communication between writers. Even though they might be less personal, dynamic web platforms allow writers to interact instantaneously over vast distances and share pictures, links, etc.

The process of learning is primarily concerned with the involved people, the duration and frequency of interaction amongst participants, and building upon existing knowledge. Then, in the case of graffiti, the Internet provides an extended field for interaction and learning from peers. Most importantly, the Internet provides writers with the opportunity to communicate with peers with different levels of mastery from other cities, have more regular interactions with other graffitists (especially when compared to the occasional meetings with masterwriters in the past), and revise and re-consult the stored interactions and communicative exchanges. In other words, it facilitates networked learning within graffiti community.

The website *Streetfiles.org* provides an interesting example here. Writers create an account and start uploading their works while other users can post comments. Several options for categorization are available and "Love"–"Hate" buttons are provided. *Streetfiles* is a space where graffiti flicks from around the globe can be either judged or consulted. Except for the less critical, yet stimulative, comments such as "dope," "burner," "killer," and so on, there are some others more evaluative, like "I don't get this or that letter," "you should work more on your execution," "it looks depressive," or "check this or that piece or writer." It is easy to understand that the first three comments are instructional and critical, while the fourth is directional. These comments are useful, not only for the writer, in order to figure out the problems and correct the style, color, or execution, but also because they direct the next "reader" of the piece: this reaction list biases the reader. In turns, all graffitists comment and are commented on, criticize, and become the subjects of criticism. During the process, graffitists become aware of their axiological situation, thus raising "critical consciousness" (Freire, 1970/2005).

Apart from *Streetfiles* or relevant graffiti websites, such as *Streetpins.com*, writers create their own blogs, either personal or collective. In all cases, the "voters" provided are welcomed and used to grade each other's pieces. When writers, experienced or not, receive too many negative grades, they need to reconsider their work. Negative votes may refer to different aspects of a piece: ethical (e.g., writing on respected places, such as a church), aesthetic (e.g., the piece may be of low quality in execution, coloring, or style) or subcultural (e.g., writing over a better piece). During this evaluation, writers absorb many important values, such as considering the social impact of their actions, working hard to improve, and being aware of the rules and structures embedded in a field of operation.

In chat boxes and online fora, writers discuss graffiti issues, share experiences, ask questions, and get answers, and debate on the "philosophy" of their culture. In fora such as *Hip-Hop.gr*, one of the most popular graffiti fora in Greece from which we draw our examples in this paragraph, writers ask for information and technical directions, such as "Which cans and caps are better and why?" or tips on drawing techniques, for instance "How can I make a stencil?" They share links and categorize resources (e.g., graffiti books and films). They also discuss local news, such as "Who got caught and what went wrong?" that later ignites relevant subjects like "What to do in case you face legal charges for writing." Building upon or modifying former conversations, different people with different perspectives and backgrounds, both in real and graffiti life, offer and share their experiences, and in the process are transformed from passive receivers of information into active agents in the creation of knowledge. People with different outside, non-graffiti related, experiences interact to produce culturally meaningful and useful knowledge.

Apart from the technical issues, fora host debates that are aesthetically and culturally grounded. For instance, one initiates a discussion under the topic "What do you think of this writer?" and the comments which follow are not dissimilar to that of an art history classroom (e.g., comparisons with other writers of the same "writing tradition," colors and techniques used, sociotemporal context). During these conversations, graffitists are trained to evaluate each other's work, while participating in fertile criticism which is, implicitly or not, aesthetically, culturally, and contextually grounded. Other questions such as "What is your opinion of this or that graffiti-related film or mainstream article?" fuel hotly debated issues of how "outsiders" think of graffiti and to what extent these representations properly address certain aspects of writing. In a sense, writers implicitly learn how to engage with a discourse analysis. Graffitists are also occasionally asked to "Vote for the best writers in Athens and the provinces." In this case, they are indirectly asked to demonstrate their trained judgment and be prepared to justify their choices. At the same time, they are asked to be vigilant and up-to-date: writers need to be aware of not only the history but also the current writing "trends" and active local communities.

By addressing questions and opening up subjects, "learners" lead and facilitate the discussions that take place in such platforms. In doing so, they rapidly learn not only to direct the conversations but also to position their questions and enquiries in such a way that opens up different, and often conflicting, dimensions of a subject, especially when it comes to graffiti philosophy. Even more importantly, these discussions remain stored and available, thus perpetually useful and renewable.

The Internet seems to construct a new, shared, "connected" writing culture. In online interactions and exchanges works are presented, skills are demonstrated, status is conferred, subcultural identities are negotiated, cultural principles are questioned and destabilized, criticism is involved and crystallized, and axiological criteria are formed. Knowledge is created and distributed, at the same time that common concerns are debated and personal stories are told. What is discussed online derives from the offline experience, and what is learnt online influences the offline practice. The "traditional" graffiti methods through which historical, cultural, and aesthetic criteria used to pass from one generation to the next, either

through participation in crews or apprenticeship with a master writer, are now extended from online interactions. However, two major graffiti characteristics are still difficult to transfer online: the technique of execution and the way that writers locate their spots for intervention. The former depends on direct engagement with the materiality of the city, and trial and error is needed to develop the craftsmanship. The latter relies on deep spatial and cultural understanding of the immediate urban surroundings. Different factors are involved that largely dictate writing practice: graffiti is all about constraints.

Writing In Situ

Material and Cultural Restrictions: Becoming Context Sensitive

Graffiti relies upon its "artifacts." It is in the practice of writing, its positioning in physical public places, that the subculture is implied and evinced, becoming powerful and subject to valuation by other members. "To the uninvolved and uninformed, graffiti may seem out of control," but as Jeff Ferrell and Robert Weide note, "in reality it's largely controlled by the urban environment in which it exists" (2010, p. 50). In the same way that the parasite relies on its host, graffiti depends on its location, its surface of application.

Graffiti is simultaneously a physical act and a cultural practice. As such, it is ruled by both material and social restrictions. Physiological and circumstantial constraints, in other words contextual restrictions, dictate graffiti writing. Scale is one of the first physical challenges that neophyte writers have to face. They need to learn to transcribe a sketch, which is rarely larger than an A4 page, into a wall size piece, that is usually at least three meters long. Constraints encountered during the execution of a real size piece (e.g., too long straight lines) are reflected back to refine the style in sketch. Further, through their practice in situ, graffitists develop material sensitivity (e.g., invent new techniques for different textures) and start to appreciate, or even manipulate, several immaterial qualities (e.g., use particular colors that develop a special visual dialogue with a sunset or a water reflection).

The restrictions imposed by and the opportunities emerging from the urban surroundings play an extremely important part in graffiti. Writers' mediated exposures are not often easily replicable in their cities (cf. Kidder, 2012, p. 248). As Chmielewska argues, "each city canvas invites a different treatment, form, placement, extent, and magnitude for wall writing" (2007, p. 156). It is completely different to practice graffiti in New York, Tokyo, and Athens, not only in terms of textures, places, and infrastructure available, but also in how graffiti is socially perceived. For example, mainly due to the lack of infrastructures, the Greek graffiti scene formed and evolved on walls rather than on trains, in contrast to the US scene. In Los Angeles, signature graffiti was considered to be closely associated with gang activity, while in Greece, at least in the early 1990s, it was even associated with hooliganism. The prominent model of Greek domestic buildings affords different treatments compared to the building blocks in New York City.

Graffiti is driven by numerous visual, spatial, social, and subcultural criteria (cf. Chmielewska, 2009, p. 272; Ferrell & Weide, 2010, p. 51). It is governed by the materiality of surface, the visibility of and accessibility to the spot, the morphology of the city, and even the weather conditions. For instance, wind direction imposes restrictions and calls for special techniques, while the potential humidity on a surface would also affect the final product. The graffitists who have faced difficulties and made technical "errors" during the execution of a piece often write apologies for their mistakes to the graffiti community. As Susan Stewart notes, "writers will often make evaluative comments part of their 'pieces', leaving a history of the constraints on their work: 'sorry about the drips', 'it's cold', 'cheap paint', 'too late, too tired' etc" (1987, p. 166).

Writers learn to adopt, or even invent, completely different tactics. The mediated exposure is translated and adjusted in the specific cultural and spatial context; it is locally performed. In the process, writers learn to be adaptable, seek originality, fight against misconceptions, organize tactics, take risks, be brave and so forth. They learn that all cultural formations, even the most self-referential ones such as graffiti, are context sensitive, both in terms of production and social perception. The reactions that their activity invites emerge in a cultural, spatial, and temporal frame. Even if graffiti draws boundaries between the scene and the rest of society, the writing community soon finds out that the "outside" world largely affects the way the inside is structured. Graffitists learn that not only the material and spatial but also the social and cultural restrictions largely define the way people operate in a given field. In a sense, writers become familiar with how different cultural formations interact with and mutually designate one another, and learn to recognize and understand the existing and emerging social structures. Most importantly, since graffiti is all about publishing one's work and being exposed to the public, graffitists learn to overcome fear of exposure in a given public domain.

Graffiti on the Spot: Changing Worldview and Vision

Various groups "read" the generic urban elements differently. Where others see a handrail which ensures their safety, skateboarders see an element to slide on; where others see a bench to sit on, traceurs understand it as an obstacle to overcome; where others see a wall which shields private from public life, graffiti writers read a surface to broadcast their personal stories. In parkour terms, this is called "PK" vision and refers to an alternative way of looking, experiencing, and understanding urban elements (Kidder, 2012, pp. 245–247). It could be called SK and GF vision for skateboarding and graffiti, respectively. It does not really matter how we label it. What matters is what this vision is: it is a different way of "reading" the city.

"Reading the city differently" is a way of re-imagining the affordances of urban elements. According to James J. Gibson, the affordances of an object or environment are its embedded properties that allow and furnish an individual's action (1979/1986, p. 127). Today the term is used to refer to the overtly visible, easily

recognizable, functional indications of objects, whereas we refer to the latent and imaginative perceptible properties of the environment that reveal any hidden possibilities for action. Being a writer means to know the surface, to understand, and re-imagine its affordances. Knowing the graphic space of writing is crucial for writers because they have to appropriate different techniques, means, and materials so as to intervene properly. The graphic space on which a text is situated and the materials used to produce it define its reading. Graffitists exploit the affordances of their objects (e.g., spray-paint, walls, photography, websites) and that of their environment (e.g., urban and/or virtual space) to convey subculturally meaningful messages. In the process, they learn to appreciate the "hidden" qualities and to imagine the potentialities of their immediate environments.

Writers do not read each other's pieces as single images or plain signs; they recognize them as visual events. When graffitists look at a piece, they read and appreciate its invisible characteristics. Through the years, writers' vision is trained not only to evaluate other graffitists' pieces but also to read the city differently. Stephen J. Saville, in his study on parkour (2008), argues that the trained and mature traceur's body leads to "immaturity," driven by the playful engagement with urban materiality. This also seems to be the case for graffiti. Although the selection of appropriate spots for graffiti interventions may seem random and accidental, in reality it is deliberate and based on long-trained vision. Material and immaterial, corporeal and incorporeal, as well as cultural factors shape writers' mental urban mapping and vision.

Writers constantly scan their surroundings seeking to occupy the most appropriate spots and urban elements for their purposes. In doing so, they develop an acute eye, a very special sensitivity in appreciating the visual characteristics of the urban environment. Writers do not watch; they see the city. They do not look at the city from a distance, but read it closely. Graffitists occupy and frame the urban environment with their vision. Since they need to learn how to attract attention, writers develop a unique spatial cognition concerned with materiality, depth, perspective, color, and everything that produces visual impact and emotional response. Consequently, it is not surprising that many writers follow successful mainstream careers in disciplines where creativity, spatial perception, and visual communication are crucial.

Apart from styles, colors, and so on, graffiti is all about "the spot." This has led graffitists to a constant exploration of the city. In fact, committed writers know their cities as no one else does, from the most visible and crowded places to the abandoned and silent alleys. This fact further enhances their emotional attachment with space and their sense of belonging. The latter leads graffitists to feel they own the city and that have the right to actively engage with its production. Even if writers' messages are not overtly political, the acts of writing and reclaiming space for expression are. With their writings, graffitists challenge and denaturalize the privatization of contemporary urban space that is increasingly becoming the unquestioned and taken-for-granted social norm.

This fact makes them think critically not only of the ethics and aesthetics of urban space but also of its modes of production. A relevant point is raised by Freire when he notes that critical consciousness is the result of "intervention in the world"; when the students, or the writers in our case, start to consider themselves "as transformers

of that world" (Freire, 1970/2005, p. 73). He also pinpoints the fact that the "banking" concept has transformed individuals into "spectators, not re-creators" (1970, p. 75). The "critical consciousness" in regard to urban space production is highlighted by the Greek graffiti writer Besore (2011):

> Graffiti for me, apart from a means of communication with other writers, is a way of declaring my existence in public space; this is a fact that the wider society often ignores. Most people believe that the city is a spectacle, a final product that has been constructed just to be seen and not to be co-produced; this prevailing social perception transforms every urban intervention, including graffiti, into an illegal act.

Ferrell and Weide (2010) argue that writers' decision to paint in specific places is driven, governed, and shaped in accordance to the following: the audience addressed and the visibility of the spot, the anticipated longevity and potential durability of their pieces in the particular place, the availability of space and competition among writers for particular spots and the seriality and accumulation, i.e., writing across diverse neighborhoods and spaces. This ability to locate and intervene in particular spots "is built from a writer's participatory knowledge of the graffiti subculture, and from an understanding of the places and situations that members of that subculture imbue with cultural significance" (Ferrell & Weide, 2010, pp. 49–50; cf. Ferrell, 2013). However, spots are neither solid and permanent nor univocal. They both influence and are influenced by subcultural, physical, and representational dynamics. The latest technological developments, including digital photography and Internet-based communication technologies, have radically changed the way writers understand their environment and "liquefied the spots" (Ferrell & Weide, 2010, p. 59). Since "physically absent others are increasingly able to be virtually present," the Web becomes "the spot" (Kidder, 2012, p. 240). The Internet platforms seem to "have become the new fame spots. Writers don't have to consider the potential audience of the actual spot" (Snyder, 2009, p. 148). Although it refers to graffiti magazines, Snyder's previous quote acquires even greater power when considered in relation to digital media distribution.

Should we consider that graffiti is dependent on its audiences, then the way writers choose their spots for intervention is radically changed: the online practice largely affects the offline. Since writers no longer broadcast their work only in the real world but rather in the virtual, the way their work is documented and distributed designates their choice of the spot. This shift from the original to representational, the change from one transmission channel to another, dictates not only the reception of the message, but also how the producer of the message thinks of the message and acts in the physical world. It seems that graffitists choose their spots in accordance with the anticipated image; the expected picture of the piece comes before its actual execution. Graffiti's representation and circulation "liquefied" not only the spots but also the writers' vision.

Nowadays some pieces are especially designed for the Internet, or rather for particular web environments, such as *YouTube* or *Facebook*. The graffitists who produce such pieces, which are usually executed in less visible physical spaces, do so to make fun of those writers who seek "cheap fame" (e.g., a piece that writes *Instafame* that sarcastically paraphrases *Instagram*, or another one that copies the

characteristic red box of *YouTube*'*s* logo and writes *YouSuck*), or to comment on the relationship between the virtual and the real environments. The recently launched #*graffitichallenge* is perhaps the best example to illustrate the reciprocal relationship between the digital and physical practice in this specific subcultural context. In Greece, this challenge was initiated by Nar, a Salonika-based graffitist, in September 2014. The graffiti challenge works as follows: a graffitist produces a tag or piece in a physical spot and then posts a photograph on *Facebook*, where other writers are challenged to do the same in 48 h. Nar starts the challenge by writing a slogan which reads "nice spot" accompanied by an arrow which points to the wall (Fig. 7.4a). Beneath the piece stand the names of those who are invited to accept the challenge. In response to Nar's challenge, the Athens-based graffitist Rtm creates a character that depicts a man executing a pole vault while tagging (Fig. 7.4b). The piece is followed by the message "Yo Nar, Don't do it for the Spot, Do it for the Sport" and a list of further challenged graffitists. Wake from Vienna accepts Rtm's challenge and, on his turn, calls more writers to accept the challenge—and so forth.

Despite the undeniable mobilization that the #*graffitichallenge* causes in the graffiti scene, perhaps its most striking aspect is the repetitive use of a digital element, namely the hashtag (#), in physical spaces. The hashtag is a type of metadata tag which allows similarly tagged messages in social networking services to be grouped and retrieved upon an electronic search. Similarly, physical hashtag group geographically dispersed pieces and connects writers. In doing so, it creates a subculturally meaningful network of locations, a new global data map, while highlighting the dialectical relation that the real and virtual share in graffiti world. In this case, the hashtag, both as convention and function of the Internet, is literally transcribed in physical world before returning back to the Web, and in the process reveals how the physical graffiti piece, its representation, and its channel of dissemination are fused. The #*graffitichallenge* emphatically demonstrates that the line between online and offline practice is fine, or even nonexistent.

Today the links between location, risk, and the subsequent fame conferred are broken, since the original source and its representation image are conflated.



Fig. 7.4 The #graffitichallenge. (**a**) "Nice Spot." Thessaloniki, Greece, 2014. Artist: © Nar. Photo: Courtesy Nar. (**b**) "Yo Nar, Don't do it for the Spot, Do it for the Sport." Athens, Greece, 2014. Artist: © Rtm. Photo: Courtesy Rtm

Writers see the physical world not only photographically but also "Internetically." Given that the representation of graffiti is increasingly received and evaluated, then this partially explains the contradiction that can be witnessed in today's graffiti practice when the graffitists choose to write in less visible places. Considering that physical spots have "become disconnected from their traditional subcultural status, and from their existing urban audiences," then every writing spot is seen, understood, and appreciated as a part of a global landscape (Ferrell & Weide, 2010, p. 59). This fact reconfigures several subcultural characteristics and principles, and reshapes writers' vision.

Conclusion

The way graffiti subculture is structured as a field, and how practitioners operate and are educated within its boundaries, makes it a fertile subject in thinking of alternative possible forms of learning away from the prevalent institutional settings. The mutation and the dissemination of the graffiti field is based on how writers communicate with each other and reach their audiences, which in turn is a matter of technology. The primary way through which graffitists expand their field of communication is by manipulating the affordances of different objects, environments, and technologies. Graffitists reflexively adapt their practice in the physical world to their evolving understanding which derives from the appropriation of the subculturally useful characteristics that information and communication technologies afford.

What seems to be important in dealing with the representation and circulation of graffiti in online environments is not how it travels instantly, transcending the spatio-temporal boundaries, but rather how the use of the Internet affects, changes, and expands the graffscape within which writers perceive their spatial and social reality and redefine their practice and learning in accordance with this new understanding. That is not to say that the virtual overmatches the real; graffiti affirms the continuity between the real and the virtual. Writers' virtual experience is not disconnected by their real experience; the former is influenced and enhanced by the latter, and vice versa.

Through their participation in production and representation of graffiti, writers learn various invaluable lessons: be hard-working, innovative, collaborative but also independent; self-determined, self-motivated, responsible, trustworthy, and so forth. Moreover, graffitists gradually develop "critical consciousnesses" of understanding power relations in education and society. They are also equipped with technical skills, knowledge, and values to critically encounter and meet the requirements of a mainstream life and career. In a global environment where technology and communication are ever more important, perhaps one of the most significant elements that evolve through participation in graffiti community is creative manipulation of physical, analog and digital environments and tools. Those elements, and their adaptability, provide both the impetus and the necessary skills for success in mainstream careers, where management, creativity, visual communication, and imaginative engagement with all types of materiality are determinant.

Moving from the real to the virtual, writers develop a reflexive spatial, cultural, and technological way of thinking and operating. This oscillation between different

spaces and media changes the way they see, understand, and act in physical space. Technologies expanded the graffscape and, in doing so, provided a wider learning field for graffitists. The Internet made the learning process of graffiti easier and broadened writers' horizons by exposing them to a wealth of information and providing them with platforms for interaction. This medium, however, seems to be less capable of fully supplanting the traditional apprenticeship; it extends it, but not univocally.

Ultimately, what emerges from the current analysis is that writers' fields of exposure are not limited to the local urban landscapes or the graffiti media. Instead, graffitists' works relentlessly flow and reach de-territorialized audiences within the global graffscape. It is in this same field that writers today acquire and evolve many important elements for an alternative life. In the continuous, iterative, and reciprocal relationship between the physical and digital, graffiti constantly moves from urban to virtual spaces and back.

Acknowledgement We are grateful to Dr. Ella Chmielewska and Dr. Petar Jandrić for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

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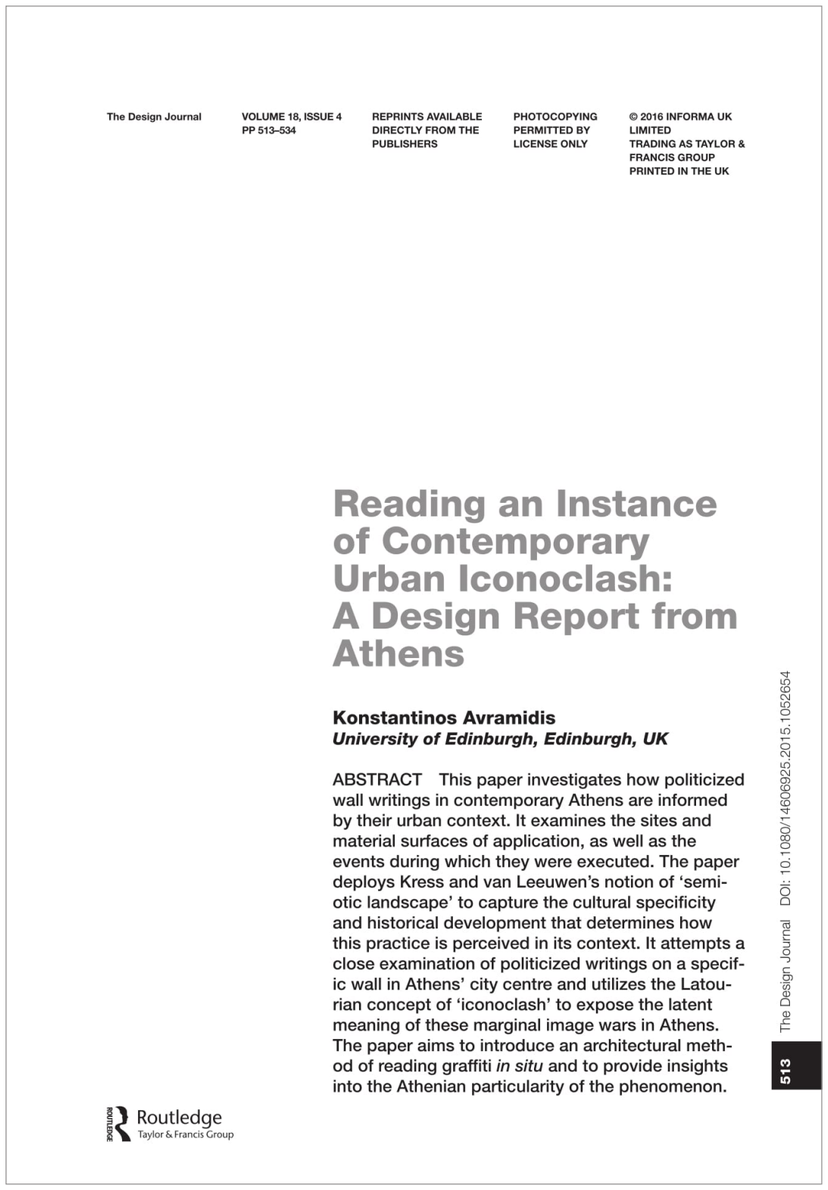
6.5. Published V

The article entitled *Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens* (2015) was my invited contribution to the special issue on 'Visual Communication Design in the Balkans' of the peer-review *Design Journal* which was edited by architect and design theorist Jilly Traganou and design historian Artemis Yagou. The article deploys Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) notion of "semiotic landscape" to capture the cultural specificity and historical development that determines how graffiti are perceived in their contexts whilst utilising the Latourian concept "iconoclash" (2002) to expose the latent meaning of these marginal image wars in Athens.

The essay investigates how politicized wall writings in contemporary Athens are informed by their urban context. To do so, it attempts a close design documentation of graffiti on a specific edifice in Athens' city centre which plays a special role in contemporary crisis: the Bank of Greece headquarters building. The article presents – as a merely illustrated essay – nearly a whole section of the dissertation which, by itself, adds particular weight on this publication. It aimed to introduce an architectural method of reading graffiti and provide insights into the Athenian particularity of the phenomenon. Even though that contextualisation of the BoG works relatively well in a textual form, the same is not the case with the argument regarding the situated character of the graffiti matrix on the architectural matrix. The traditional format of the journal paper proved to be restrictive, compromising the development and presentation of the argument with visual means. Nonetheless, when I started working on this article I realised that my texts ought to be designed in a particular way that reflects the argument related to the serialisation of graffiti on architecture and the visual material sequenced in such a way that allows the reader to follow its temporality and move between scales.



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Reading an Instance of Contemporary Urban Iconoclash: A Design Report from Athens

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ABSTRACT This paper investigates how politicized wall writings in contemporary Athens are informed by their urban context. It examines the sites and material surfaces of application, as well as the events during which they were executed. The paper deploys Kress and van Leeuwen's notion of 'semiotic landscape' to capture the cultural specificity and historical development that determines how this practice is perceived in its context. It attempts a close examination of politicized writings on a specific wall in Athens' city centre and utilizes the Latourian concept of 'iconoclash' to expose the latent meaning of these marginal image wars in Athens. The paper aims to introduce an architectural method of reading graffiti *in situ* and to provide insights into the Athenian particularity of the phenomenon.

Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

The Design Journal DOI: 10.1080/14606925.2015.1052654

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KEYWORDS: Athens; graffiti and place; iconoclash; semiotic landscape; urban space

This paper focuses on a specific kind of public writing in Athens that is politicized in nature, and which I term 'politicized urban writing' (cf. Avramidis, 2012, 2014). In order to understand the conditions that engender these writings and the parameters that affect their meaning, i.e. their physical and semiotic features, this paper examines the sites and material surfaces of application, as well as the events during which they were executed. Yet, neither sites and materials nor spatial and visual communication practices, such as wall writing, are a-cultural or a-historical. Cultural specificity and historical development are all important so as to understand how mediums and venues are chosen, used and perceived in their context.

Primary observations from Athens' walls suggest that neoclassical buildings are now the main targets of urban writers. By foregrounding the iconographic and topographic role of national imagination in the current state of crisis, this study discusses how this intentional positioning of public writings spoils the 'image of Greece' that is symbolically embedded in the particular architectural style. I use Bruno Latour's (2002) concept of 'iconoclash' to examine the underlying urge of the production and destruction of these images as well as to expose the context-dependent meaning of these marginal image 'wars' in Athens. Building upon Ella Chmielewska's (2007) context-sensitive analysis of urban writing and Rafael Schacter's (2008, 2014) theoretical treatment of graffiti and iconoclash, I attempt a close investigation of politicized writings in their spatio-temporal context. To do so, I use the marks on the Bank of Greece's (BoG) historical building in the centre of Athens as a case study (Figure 1).

This paper zooms in and out in space and time; it moves between different scales, from the mark to the wall and from the building to the street, and makes connections between seemingly unrelated and distant historical periods, from the Greek nation building to the contemporary crisis era, so as to bring together the material and spatial specificity of the individual graphic mark with the wider urban visual environment, social reality and national imaginary.

This study combines design with text: the design project, which I call *Wall Archive*, creates a record of the writings on a particular wall of the BoG, while the text presents primary considerations emerging from the project and provides its context and theoretical framework.[1] The project attempts to reconstruct the recent history of a wall by following the appearance and erasure of markings using existing photographs. The images I collected within a period of four months (March–June 2013) are exclusively from online sources. The record which constitutes my project is partial: it focuses merely on the writings that made their appearance on the main entrance of the BoG building at Panepistimiou Avenue. I restricted my project to the



Figure 1
(a) The Bank of Greece building; (b) a close up of the portico, 2013. Photographs by the author.

portico because the vast majority of the images that I managed to gather depicted writings that were located there. Also, this delimitation enabled me to set up the spatial boundaries of the study and facilitated the recording procedure. Through the collected images I ordered the writings chronologically and found the links to their particular events. I divided the marks in 'sets', which are groups of writings before their removal. Each mark is indexed with a letter-number prefix; the letter refers to the writing set while the number to the mark's display order within the particular set.

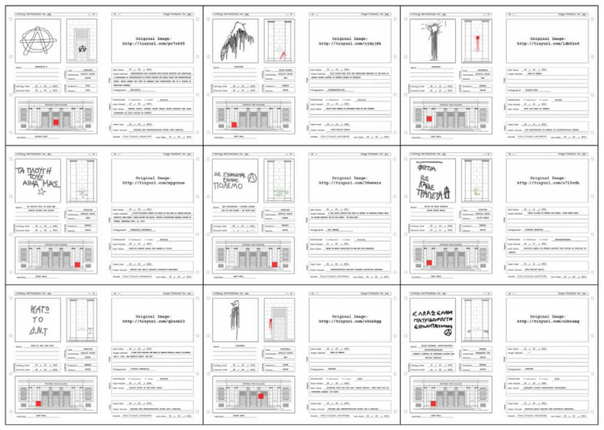

Figure 2
A sample of record cards. Designed by the author.

All these finds are registered in record cards, which are combinations of notes, drawings and photographs (Figure 2). Each card provides information about the mark, the event during which the writing was produced and the photograph through which the mark was identified. The *Wall Archive* forms the material basis of this analysis and has a dual function. It is not only a methodological tool but also a device that records and organizes the found material – its flexible nature permits it to be a constantly renewable source in which new finds are added and old ones are edited.

The practice of wall writing in context

Public writings do not exist in isolation. Each one is an element of a specific material surface that, most of the time, belongs to a building which in turn is situated in a street that is part of an urban landscape. Every urban sign indexes a particular discourse, yet once it is placed *in situ*, develops a dynamic dialogue with its environment and interacts with all the semiotic features of its surroundings. In what follows in this section I examine the historical development of wall writing in the particular urban context of Athens.

The semiotic landscape: cultural specificity and historical development

Chmielewska (2007) borrows the concept 'semiotic landscape' from Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen to examine how graffiti develop in time and relate to their surround in a particular context. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) introduce the term 'semiotic landscape' to describe modes of public communication as well as their uses and valuations in a given society. The notion is of interest here because it allows us to study how different modes of communication that coexist in urban space interact with each other in a given context.

Kress and van Leeuwen note that 'the features of a landscape only make sense in the context of their whole environment and of the history of its development' (1996: 35). In other words, each semiotic object needs to be examined in relation to the entirety of the other semiotic elements that surround it. Also, it has to be studied in context, in the particular moment in the specific society, but without losing sight of its historical transformations. It is in the specific cultural, social and political moment that a semiotic object or practice produces meaning(s). For example, the meaning of the practice of wall writing, as a low-tech mode of communication in a digital era, is significantly different than it was, for instance, 10 years ago. Also, a graffito written into a visual landscape comprised by spectacular neoclassical façades, as is the case in Panepistimiou Avenue in Athens, would produce a considerably different meaning if placed in a landscape saturated with graffiti, such as the Exarchia district in Athens.

Every element of a semiotic landscape, whether a building, a toponymic sign, or a graffito, is neither timeless nor has one stable meaning. Each feature, according to Kress and van Leeuwen, 'has its history, as does the landscape as a whole, and each is subject to constant remaking' (1996: 35). Kress and van Leeuwen base the notion of semiotic landscape on the cultural values of the society in question; they argue that it is these beliefs that 'induce' people to produce the specific semiotic elements, and arrange them in a particular way so as to construct and convey certain meanings (1996: 35). A semiotic landscape holds the elements within it together and allows them to be understood as a whole – as a singular entity. The particular positioning of each sign within a given visual landscape influences and is influenced by the meaning and existence of others. The arrangement of these signs adds yet another layer in the ensemble of meaning(s) within a particular landscape, in a given society, in a specific moment.

Published V | 6.5.0-03

'The wall had a history of its own': the particularity of Athens wall writing

The street had a history of its own,
Someone wrote it with paint on the wall,
It was just a single word, Freedom
Later it was argued that it was written by some kids.[2]

The opening quote of this paragraph is an extract from the song *O Dromos* (*The Street*), written by Kostoula Mitropoulou and set to music by Manos Loizos in 1974, just after the end of the seven-year long military junta in Greece (1967–1974). This ballad has become very popular and still enjoys a very special place in the Greek collective consciousness as it is considered to be a point of reference for a whole generation. This song vividly illustrates how Greek society perceives its streets, its walls and the practice of wall writing in a specific historical instance.

The lyrics of *The Street*, despite its title, primarily focus on walls, thus underlining the reciprocal relationship they share with streets (cf. Varoufakis and Vitalspace.org, 2013). For Loizos and Mitropoulou, the street is a synonym of freedom, and the wall is a space where the latter is practiced. Given the popularity of the song and its established position in the Greek collective memory, it might be argued that it provides a wider historical context for the practice of wall writing in Athens. The writings' constant presence in the Greek visual landscape and their politicized role allow us to draw a line of continuity and better understand their contemporary counterparts. After all, in many cases, the very same walls host today's writings.

O Dromos poetically highlights the significance of walls as resistance spaces and provides unique insights into the physiognomy of the post-dictatorial everyday life. The wall is a canvas on which hope is inscribed and through which rebels encourage peers and communicate with a wider audience. The ballad not only shows how significant and popular the practice of wall writing was in Greece but also instills this significance in the collective consciousness. Even more importantly, in its few condensed lyrics, the song captures a very particular and sensitive moment of socio-political transition in Greece that is manifest in its rapidly changing visual landscape.

Then time passed and history moved on
[The word freedom] easily moved from memory to heart
Now the wall reads 'unique bargains'
'Inside the shop you can find all kinds of stuff'.

As the second verse of the song evinces, once life got back to normal after the end of the Junta, the Athenian urban landscape experienced a considerable visual transformation, the extent of which drew the attention of the composer. In post-dictatorial

Athens, walls cease to be the sole venues of free expression against the censorship, oppression and injustice of the Junta and become advertisement surfaces that praise commerce and capital. The word 'freedom' is replaced by 'bargains'; the words on the wall, the handwritten instances of individual self-expression that ignited inspiration and adornment to their onlookers, now give their place to mechanically produced typographic elements and vacuous spectacular phrases. From a place of resistance, the wall is now transformed into a space of opportunity for profit.

The political roots of contemporary urban writing in Athens can be traced back to the Axis Occupation (1941–1944), later to the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), and relatively more recently to the Dictatorship (1967–1974). Yet, from 1974 until 2008, the practice of wall writing in Athens changed significantly. During this period, wall writers adapted a new writing instrument, i.e. spray instead of brush paint. The political slogans were largely replaced by a new writing genre, the primary content of which was concerned with the expression of passionate support for a football club. The third and final verse of the song refers to this transformation:

Every Sunday from early morning in the cafes
and then to the football match, slogans and brawling
The street had a history of its own,
Later it was argued that it was written by some kids.

Since the late 1980s, however, signature graffiti, whose content is the name of the individual writer, massively prevailed in the Athenian visual landscape, until the 2008 Greek Young Uprising.[3] It is then that wall writing in Athens became once again political in content and politicized in purpose. It seems that Athenian walls, in terms of use, have just completed a historical full circle: from spaces of resistance they became spaces of spectacle; today that the spectacle of consumerism and false prosperity is over, their importance as civil claim raising venues re-emerges (cf. Varoufakis and Vitalspace.org, 2013).

The evolution of urban writing is important both in its own right and because it has a direct impact on the Athenian visual landscape. Yet, any study of this kind has to acknowledge the historical transformation of the visual landscape itself. It is not only the writings that change but also the entire urban landscape which is comprised by various visual signs that interact and compete with each other. Although the buildings, which are an integral part of any urban visual landscape, might not have significantly changed, several other less permanent elements, such as signs, have changed. For instance, in Panepistimiou Avenue, neoclassical architecture has prevailed for the past century or so. Yet, since the 1980s, several other visual signs – ranging from municipal to commercial and signify patriotic, state and capitalistic discourses – have made their appearance.

Published V 6.5.0-04

More importantly, what has changed is the way that visual elements and/or visual communication practices of the past are understood in the present. For example, in order to understand the differences between past and contemporary politicized urban writings in Athens, one needs to consider that the latter, in order to attract attention, have to compete not only with other marks, such as signature graffiti, but also with commercial brands.

It also needs to be stressed here that contemporary wall writers, their targets and the urban circumstances in which they act, differ considerably compared to their past counterparts. Today, politicized writing is primarily practiced by individuals who subscribe to anti-authoritarian ideologies, without necessarily being affiliated with political organizations, while during the Axis Occupation, it used to be exercised by resistance groups that had direct affiliation with a specific party (cf. Haralambidis, 2011: 300–303). Further, during the Junta, slogan writers were at much more risk to get caught and harshly penalized compared to contemporary practitioners. This does not mean, however, that policing has loosened, but rather that Greek authorities are slightly more tolerant towards such practices than they used to be.

There is a vast variety of public writing genres that coexist in Athens today – their common denominator is the place of practice, i.e. the existing urban surfaces. Not all public writings in contemporary Athens question authority or capitalism. The topics range remarkably depending on the socio-political context of their production and the neighbourhood or district in which they appear. In central Athens next to 'tags' produced by both signature graffiti writers and sports club fans, one encounters slogans that range from humorous and anti-systemic to anarchistic and nationalistic. Yet, the marks produced on state or institutional buildings and bank branches fall into primarily one category – that of politicized urban writing. It seems that the appearance, location and/or function of some buildings dictate how they will be defaced. In the contemporary state of crisis, the BoG headquarters building is a paradigmatic case of this tendency – its walls record the political turbulences and social unrests whenever they happen.

Wall writings in context

Having discussed the importance of the practice of wall writing in the Athenian context, we can now zoom in to the BoG and examine its geographical, architectural and material characteristics which affect, or rather define, the meaning of the marks that occupy it. The choice to delimit my study to the BoG was both accidental and deliberate. Accidental in the sense that it was not my initial intention to focus on this particular site, but the existence of various recordings of different writings captured my attention. Deliberate because I was seeking a place that had a symbolic burden and at the same time was prone to public writings.

The BoG headquarters building is the image of an institution; it thus needs to convey power and authority. The architectural vocabulary adopted, the materials used, and the intentional positioning of the building, along with their special, heavily symbolic meanings in the Athenian context, are analysed in greater detail below.

The image of an institution: writing on a 'successful façade'

The BoG was founded in 1927 and began operating on 15 May 1928 (BoG, 1978: 64–79). It is responsible for the Greek national monetary policy and had the exclusive right to issue banknotes until the eurozone was created in 2002.

Immediately after its foundation, the BoG started the preparations in order to move to a 'suitable' building in a 'proper' location, by purchasing land and launching a relevant architectural competition in 1929. The latter, despite the large number of entries from the most important Greek architects of the interwar period, proved to be fruitless. Except for honourable mentions, no prizes were awarded. This was 'due to the lack of a premium design, a good functional plan that responds to a definitely successful façade', as the bank reported (BoG, 1978: 165). The keyword here is 'successful'. What does 'successful façade' mean? The submitted proposals were judged based on what the building's façade would convey. The façade should not only be successful but 'definitely successful' – with double emphasis. The primary concern of the BoG was the image of the building, its 'successful façade'; the functional aspects were secondary.

In 1930, the BoG commissioned the design of the building to the architects Konstantinos Papadakis and Nikolaos Zoumboulides, who served as director and technical advisor respectively at the Bank's newly established Real Estate department. The BoG's central building, in architectural terms, is governed by the principles of neoclassicism which, along with classical academicism, at that time were the dominant styles of public architecture in Athens (cf. Kardamitsi-Adami, 2011: 58–62). Despite its massive scale and rich interior, it uses a simple, monolithic and austere stylistic vocabulary at the exterior. Emmanouil Tsouderos, who was the CEO of the BoG in 1938 and later served as a Greek PM, during the opening ceremony of the new building stated that 'the façade of the new palace reveals the character of the Institution' (Venezis, 1955: 208). Here, this specific architectural form needs to express the institutional principles: the building symbolizes and speaks for the institution. The institution and its building are conflated; they both have to fulfill a moral purpose and carry out the mission 'to cure contemporary needs' (Venezis, 1955: 208).

Dimitres Philippides, a prominent historian of Greek architecture, aptly notes that the façade of 'the Bank of Greece building imitates

Published V 6.5.0-05

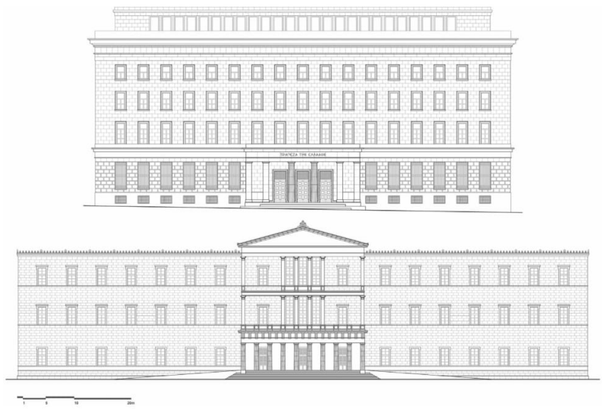

Figure 3
Top: The main façade of the Bank of Greece. Bottom: The main façade of the Greek Parliament. Illustration by the author.

that of the Old Palace [Greek Parliament]' (1984: 240), designed by the Bavarian architect Friedrich von Gärtner in 1836, approximately 100 years earlier (Figure 3).[4] Perhaps, this is what the BoG's management board termed as 'successful': a symbolic resemblance to power. Here, architectural form is transformed into an ideological device: the institutional, as well as national, beliefs are embedded in the architectural style chosen.

Athenian neoclassicism: writing over the aesthetic principles of a nation

The philologist and folk scholar Alexis Politis (1993), uses a striking metaphor that links the emergence and widespread usage of *katharévousa*,[5] the official language of the newborn Greek state in the early 19th century, with the ideologies of the image of the Athenian built environment. Politis argues that neoclassicism, as an architectural vocabulary that integrates elements inspired by the classical era, massively prevailed in Athens and resembled the dominant trend in formal language to add ancient suffixes to words in order to make them sound archaic (1993: 85). Neoclassicism is of interest here not only as an aesthetic choice that largely defined the physiognomy of Athens' city centre, especially of Panepistimiou Avenue, but also as an ideological mechanism contributing to the formation, crystallization and homogenization of national and bourgeois urban identity.

The dominance of neoclassicism in Athens is far from accidental. Neoclassical architecture had two competitive advantages: it provided a visual sense of Greek-ness, by celebrating the classical architectural elements in a city that was in search of national identity, and, at the same time, bore similarities with the modern Western capitals, distancing itself from the Ottoman past. Despite the fact that this architectural movement was thriving in the West during the 19th century, the migration of neoclassicism in Athens is quite unique. What distinguishes the Athenian case is not the development of an innovative style but the conviction that neoclassicism has its origins in Athens and thus it was not a foreign import but, as the urban planning historian Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis argues, 'a counterloan' (1995: 104). According to the architectural historian Eleni Bastea, neoclassical architecture was celebrated 'as a uniquely Greek creation' (2000: 148). Most of the important public buildings in Athens in the 19th and early 20th centuries, including the BoG, were built in neoclassical style and were accumulated in the main axes of the capital so as to convey the 'the symbolic and cultural image that Athens sought to establish' (Bastea, 2000: 149). This neoclassical image privileged certain visions of the past by clearing out whatever could threaten the dominant cultural and national rhetoric. It is within this historical context that neoclassicism has been gradually fetishized by the Greek population and subsequently become the target of Athenian wall writers.

Athenian marble: writing on the 'noblest of materials'

The BoG and the Greek Parliament buildings bear remarkable similarities not only in terms of architectural style but also in the use of construction materials: they are both built with the famous Pentelikon marble and Piraiki stone. The former, especially, is a symbol of wealth and classical status.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 217) argue that materials play an important role as signifiers and owe their meaning to the context in which they are produced and perceived. To illustrate their point, Kress and van Leeuwen use precious metals as an example. They believe that what is considered precious in a specific period and region is not necessarily the case elsewhere. The preciousness of a metal does not only have to do with its scarcity or physical properties, but also with the meaning and signification that specific people in a particular spatio-temporal context attach to it. Writing on a bricked or pure white marble wall, creates a considerably different visual affect; concurrently, different cultures invest different meanings in each material. For example, in Athens the marble wall is not just a traditional material used for buildings' façades, but also a heavily loaded semiotic feature that refers to the classical past of the city.

In his marble 'bible', written as early as 1909, William G. Renwick asserts that 'marble was the medium for the greatest height of

Published V 6.5.0-06

artistic expression in ancient Greece. The buildings that yet remain at Athens … are instances of the expression of the highest artistic feeling, executed in the noblest of materials' (1909: 19). The key word here is 'noble'. It is not this material's undeniable endurance over time that is of concern here. Nor are the qualities of the material mentioned, highlighted and valuated, but rather, what is significant is the fact that marble was used by an ancient civilization, idealized in Western thought, and mythologized in Greek national consciousness to produce masterpieces. This projected idealized perception of the past is what gives value to marble and makes it 'noble'. This is especially true for Pentelikon marble, which was used in the construction of the Acropolis and several other celebrated architectural and sculptural masterpieces in classical Greece, bearing extraordinary, almost mythical, symbolism. The Pentelikon marble deposits of the ancient quarry of Mount Pentelicus in Attica remained undisturbed for centuries and reopened in 1834 to provide the construction material for the erection of the Greek Parliament building and later for several other governmental or institutional buildings, such as the famous 'Athenian Trilogy'.[6]

Panepistimiou Avenue: writing in the Greek 'capital'

Emmanouil Tsouderos, during the earlier mentioned opening ceremony of the new headquarters building, did not omit to highlight the determinant role of the building's strategic positioning: 'our palace took its place amongst the brightest complex of public buildings of the capital … it ought not to disturb the rhythm and physiognomy of the bright historical institutions with which it has the fortune to be close' (Venezis, 1955: 208). Due to the Bank's proximity with the aforementioned neoclassical masterpieces, the archaeologist and philologist Antonios Keramopoulos, a well known intellectual of the time, asked for a building that would be an 'eternal jewel of the city', a palace that could not be 'subaltern, in terms of aesthetics, compared to the surrounding buildings', since 'the aesthetics standards of contemporary Greeks cannot and should not be lower than those 100 years ago' (Kardamitsi-Adami, 2011: 57). Architects had the moral responsibility to meet the national standards due to the location of the building and its proximity with the 'Athenian Trilogy'.

The building dominates the street, or rather competes with its surroundings for domination. The imposing BoG headquarters is an iconic building, yet not in the contemporary use of the term which mainly refers to structures that dominate urban skylines, such as 'the Shard' or 'the Gherkin' in London. Rather, it is iconic due to its scale, materials and placement in the specific Athenian context. Further, it owes a large part of its significance to its function and the institution that it represents.

Nowadays, Panepistimiou Avenue is full of symbols of nation, authority and capitalism. Moving along the avenue, one is surrounded by prestigious façades of institutional buildings with rich facings, statues, national flags, toponymic signs that bear heroic names, and global brands. One cannot overlook the close relationship of property ownership with the politics of the image of the street. It must be underlined here that most of the emblematic and prestigious buildings along Panepistimiou Avenue, upon which politicized writing often occurs, belong to banks (Rigopoulos, 2012). The historical map of banks in Greece is complex and constantly changing, characterized by several acquisitions, mergers, and renamings. Yet, the amount of assets at Panepistimiou Avenue that belong to banks has significantly increased throughout the last two centuries, resulting in an accumulation of properties at the hands of a few financial institutions. Today, several banks have their headquarters across the avenue, while there are at least three whole building blocks belonging to financial institutions (among them is the BoG). In other words, it is the place where the Greek 'capital' dwells.

Panepistimiou Avenue, due to its strategic location linking the working class Omonoia Square with the bourgeois Syntagma Square, bears yet another layer of symbolism for the Greek society: that of collective civil claims. From the 2008 Greek Youth Uprising up to date, Panepistimiou Avenue became the stage for numerous peaceful rallies as well as the battlefield of several riotous demonstrations that further affected the hybrid political image of the street, where the prevailing national image encounters its opposition.

An iconoclash in context

It is obvious that neither the image nor the location of the BoG building are accidental. They are deliberate and designate the meaning of the writings that occupy it. Yet, neither are the urban writings accidental: urban writers know how politically charged the street is, what neoclassical architecture and marble mean for the Greek society, and the special role the specific institution plays in the current financial crisis. In other words, they recognize these visual and cultural characteristics of the building and its landscape, and transform them into a canvas of political clash.

Beliefs and motives of iconoclasts: spoiling the image of the Bank of Greece

Visual culture scholar W.J.T. Mitchell defines iconoclasm as the practice of defacement or destruction of images, and considers it to be the best starting point to initiate the discussion on the nature of 'offensive images', as he terms them (2005: 126). For Mitchell, images are 'offensive' when they cause reactions due to their content, form or placement. People offended by images often offend them back, and Mitchell identifies two beliefs at play when this happens (2005: 127). The first is that images are linked to the beliefs and/or

ideologies that they represent, and thus 'whatever is done to the image is somehow done to what it stands for' (2005: 127). The second is that images are considered to have an 'animated living character' and are equipped with their own agency that enables them to 'feel' what is done to them. In other words, images are often treated as 'pseudopersons … [as] responsible and responsive social beings' (2005: 127). It is this belief in the animated nature of the image that leads an iconoclast to physically damage it in order to attack the belief that engendered it.

Art historian David Freedberg has extensively studied the power of images to invite reactions. More specifically, his 'theory of response' (1989) examines how artworks, whether two-dimensional images or three-dimensional objects and buildings, become subjects of responses in different epochs. Freedberg highlights the importance of examining iconoclasms in their social and political context, and seeks to recognize the motives of iconoclastic acts (1985: 13). He identifies three common motivations in different iconoclastic movements: the first is that of attention-seeking, the second is related to the 'hold a particular image has on imagination', while the third has to do with the belief that 'by damaging the symbols of power one somehow diminishes that power itself' (1985: 25). All three motives seem to be at play in contemporary iconoclastic acts in Athens.

The fact that iconoclastic gestures often take a spectacular public form further highlights the importance of public attention to the act. This is also the case in politicized urban writings in Athens, because, as the *Wall Archive* suggests, all the writings were produced during demonstrations. Also, it seems that urban writers know that during a mass-participation protest their writings will draw the attention of the press and will be mediatized. Further, by targeting neoclassical buildings, Athenian wall writers do acknowledge the 'hold' these edifices enjoy in the contemporary Greek national imagination and seek to spoil it. Even more specifically, they know the eminent role of the BoG as a symbol of financial power and try to diminish it by attacking its image, i.e. its historical building. Freedberg, in a later article, further investigates the motivating factors of iconoclasms and argues that iconoclasts are also driven by the desire to 'draw attention to a felt social injustice' (1992: 341). This seems to be the case with the BoG building, in the context of today's particular social and political crisis. In fact, there is a whole list of cases in central Athens wherein the image of buildings or statues is considered to be a symbol of an established order. State buildings and bank branches are those targeted most frequently, as they are seen as symbols of current financial and social inequality.

Bruno Latour, in the edited volume *Iconoclash* (2002), highlights the power of image worship and destruction in three distinct domains: science, religion and art. In order to underline the contested nature of images and their capacity to both attract and repel, captivate and offend, he terms the conflicts they trigger 'iconoclashes'. For him, an iconoclash is 'when one does not know, one hesitates, one is troubled by an action for which there is no way to know, without further enquiry, whether it is destructive or constructive' (2002: 16). In a similar vein, the anthropologist Michael Taussig asserts that defacement – the act of damaging the surface or the appearance of an object – is productive, '[it] is like Enlightenment … [it] works on objects the way jokes work on language, bringing out of their inherent magic especially when those objects have become routinized' (1999: 3, 5). Defacement releases the potential meanings of an object that are meant to be fortified and unquestioned. For Taussig, it is an act that renders visible, without changing it, a taken for granted established order, or what he terms 'public secret … that which is generally known but cannot be articulated' (1999: 5).

Defacement brings the 'depth', or rather the 'secret', to the surface. This power of defacement to reveal the sanctity of specific iconic buildings is crucial. The constant effort to reface the specific edifices, or rather the continuous attempt to secure their 'reading' by censoring particular layers of writing, renders visible that the politics of the image of place are perpetually under negotiation. From the *Wall Archive* project emerges that the average lifetime of the marks is two days. This suggests that politicized writings pose a threat to the building's image as they invite immediate responses. Every attempt to restore the previous pristine image of the Bank is motivated by the will to preserve the original, unquestioned meanings that its façade should communicate. Through iconoclasm, the once offensive image of the bank, at least for the urban writers, is transformed into a new image that is offensive to the BoG institution.

'Bank of Greece': From defacement to refacement and back

Latour identifies an inherent paradox in every iconoclastic act, i.e. that image destruction coexists with image production. For him, image attacks renew the attacked images (2002: 20). In and upon the targeted object, iconoclasts not only recognize the object's power but also project their own fears and hopes. The power of the image is not denied, but it is reinforced. In the action of its destruction, regardless of the damage caused, the targeted image affirms its power and is further fetishized by the attacker; from nothing in itself, the object becomes a powerful symbol where (counter-)beliefs are mirrored. Though, at the same time, as Joseph Koerner aptly argues, the image becomes 'a representation once again' (2002: 183). Image breakers are image makers, and vice versa (Koerner, 2002: 189).

Iconoclastic acts are not concerned with the images per se. Although iconoclasts physically attack objects, their actions are directed at what the images stand for. The final aim of the gesture

is not to harm the physical object, i.e. the medium through which beliefs are manifest or even imposed, but the beliefs that engender it. This is the reason why iconoclastic gestures are partially destructive; because, as Mitchell argues, the objective 'is not to make the image disappear but to keep it around and to render its appearance in a new way, one that is offensive to the image and what it represents' (2005: 132). Especially in the case of wall writing, it is obvious that the destruction is only superficial. Urban writing defaces – its aim is not to destroy but rather to change the appearance of an object in order to induce a new meaning. Paint damages the image of the wall, not the wall itself. As technical reports concerned with the cleaning procedures of the BoG building evince, it is not the addition but rather the removal of a writing layer that damages the material surface (Moropoulou *et al,* 2002: 758).

Iconoclastic gestures tend to be partial and localized. The commonest features damaged in representational images and statues are the eyes or the face of the figure(s) they depict. When the target is a building, the façade, i.e. the 'face' of the edifice, and its main entrance in particular, receive the most damage. This is the case in the BoG building. The entrance is not only monumental in size and imposing due to its use, but it is also the place where all the symbolic features of the BoG are concentrated (e.g. marble claddings, epigraphs, flags, etc.). The case of the three epigraphs on the portico – one large one on top and two smaller ones on each wall – is indicative. These elements are integral parts of the whole sensitive and, at the same time, symbolic design of the façade. The same linguistic message, i.e. the name of the Bank, would produce different impact and meanings if other fonts, colours, and methods of production were used. Engraving in the 'noblest of materials' conveys permanence and ensures durability; the classical Greek font chosen signifies a specific bond with a glorious past; the gold colour of the letters indexes wealth. Further, the two smaller epigraphs, both written with geometric sans serif letters, seek to show the international appeal of the BoG: the one on the left wall is in English, the most popular language on the globe, while the second on the right appears in French, namely in the so considered sophisticated language of diplomacy and international relations. It is this semiotically rich and heavily symbolic image that urban writers attack.

Politicized writers deliberately write on the walls where the Bank's epigraphs are positioned. The agents anticipate, or rather know in advance, that their actions will be recorded, reported and distributed on the Internet and thus seek to give to their global audience at least a sense of the context. The majority of photographs that capture the BoG do not accidentally focus on the portico; in a sense, mark producers direct photographers to do so. Writers launch their attacks over these elements to make them look different and spoil the beliefs that gave them birth. Yet, the portico is not a single material surface that exists only in a physical world. Its various mediated

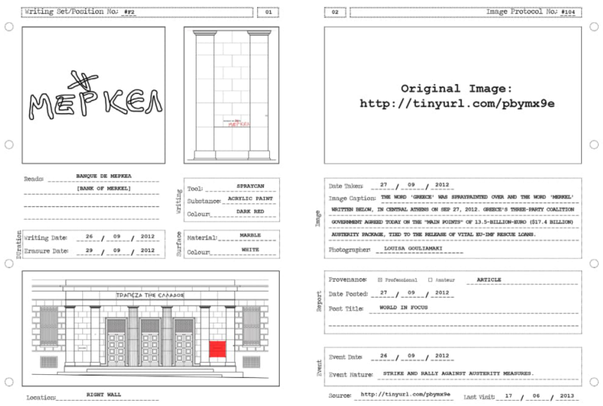

Figure 4
Record card #F2. The 'Banque de Grèce' epigraph is transformed into 'Banque de Merkel' during a demonstration in September 2012. Designed by the author.

reproductions transform the physical surface into a 'hypersurface'. Wall writers attempt to spoil both the actual and digital image of the BoG. The representations of writings on the Web are expected to last longer and circulated more widely, thus ensuring that the defaced object will remain in 'public' view.

No matter how a-contextual politicized writings may seem, their meaning stems from their context. For an uninitiated viewer, for one who is not familiar with the events during which marks are produced, the particular national matter-reality and the current socio-political situation in Athens, these writings may seem arbitrary both in terms of content and placement. Yet, a close examination of the marks in their context shows that their meaning is anchored in their distinctive physical position on the surface and the unique historical moment of their execution. For example, in terms of spatial placement, the cross mark over the BoG epigraph would not make sense, or it would produce different meaning, if it was placed elsewhere. In terms of its temporal positioning, the transformation of the 'Banque de Grèce' epigraph into 'Banque de Merkel' would make different sense if did not occur a couple of days before Chancellor Merkel's visit in Athens (Figure 4). The placement of the writing in a spatial, temporal and cultural context is key to its meaning. Iconoclasms make sense only when they are studied in their context.

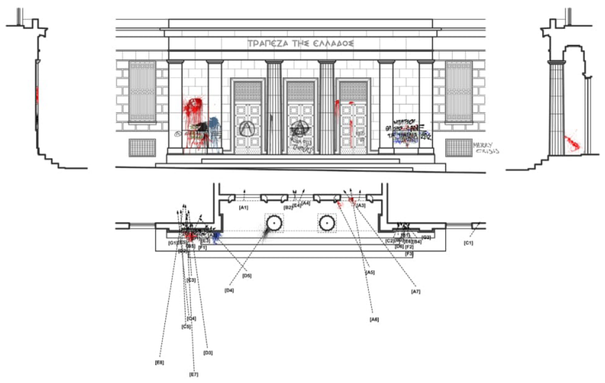

Figure 5
A drawing of the Bank of Greece portico, upon which all the writing layers are superimposed.
Illustration by the author.

Conclusion

The *Wall Archive* project concluded with the production of a drawing of the portico upon which all the writing layers are superimposed (Figure 5). The drawing is a record of what once was and discloses what could have been if no removal practices had taken place. It also captures the different conditions of the writing surface: from pristine to polluted and back. The drawing could not reveal more emphatically the constant battle over the image of the BoG and the power struggle over what is worth preserving and erasing. By bringing back to life these repressed stories, it is rendered visible how the ephemeral and marginal challenges the seemingly immobile, permanent, and unquestioned authority of the image of a building.

Based on the conviction that every writing is the material trace of a unique event, this article investigated how politicized urban writings in contemporary Athens are informed by, but also compete with, their urban contexts. This way, the study of public inscriptions can be transformed into an exploration of the complex, often hidden, dynamics and struggles that take place in and on a city. My project and text demonstrated that streets and building façades are sites where competing agents meet to articulate beliefs and negotiate supremacy. Yet, the field upon which these struggles take place, the architectural surface, is not a *tabula rasa.* To the contrary, it is loaded with conventions and symbolisms that are culturally distinct. The 'face' of architecture is a place where beliefs are imposed and counter-beliefs are expressed.

Ultimately, what emerges from the current study is that, in order to appreciate any kind of conflict, one must pay attention to the specific context in which it occurs. In addition to the explicit visual characteristics of a place, one needs to bring into the discussion its implicit qualities, such as historical developments, symbolic meanings, and cultural particularities. In this paper I proposed a method that seeks to capture as many facets of the practice of wall writing in Athens as possible and to show the, often neglected, complexity of this iconoclastic gesture in its specific context. The practice of wall writing, coupled with the reactions it invites, is a paradigmatic case of the Latourian concept of 'iconoclash' (2002: 17): the vicious circle of 'fascination, repulsion, destruction, atonement' that images cause – despite the constant effort to eradicate these marks, 'they always return again'.

Acknowledgements

Parts of this paper were presented at the 'Softening the Urban Fabric: Cities, Encounters, Subjectivities, Change' conference held on July 12, 2013 at the University of East London, UK, and at the 'Writing Place: Conference on Literary Methods in Architectural Research & Design' held from November 25–27, 2013 at the TU Delft, the Netherlands. I am grateful to Professor Jilly Traganou, Dr Artemis Yagou, Dr Ella Chmielewska and Dr Dorian Wiszniewski for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this text.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. The *Wall Archive* builds upon the *Excavating Home* project, designed by Ioannidou, 2009. Yet, the latter has a distinctly different purpose - it is an attempt to question the relationship between personal possessions in the construction of the feeling 'at home'.
2. The translation from Greek to English of the song 'O Dromos', is by the author and based on the translation available in the article Varoufakis and Vitalspace.org, 2013.
3. On 6 December 2008, the unprovoked assassination of the 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos by two policemen in Exarchia district in Athens, the stronghold of the anti-systemic movement, triggered the most severe social unrest that the country has faced in its post-dictatorial era. This is a rather symbolic date for contemporary Greek history, as it is considered to be the beginning of the current crisis.

4. See also the entry 'Bank of Greece' in the 'Greek Contemporary Monuments Database'. Available at <http://www.eie.gr/archaeologia/gr/arxeio_more.aspx?id=184> [accessed 22 January 2015].
5. *Katharévousa* (puristic [language]) is a form of modern Greek language, a mixture of archaistic and Modern Greek linguistic features, which was used as the formal language in Greece until 1976. Etymologically, *katharevousa* derives from the present participle of the Ancient Greek *kathareuō* which means 'cleaning'. The word *katharevousa* implies a pure and unspoilt form of Greek language that evolved from ancient Greek without any external, foreign and/or 'barbaric' influences. Despite the fact that it was an artificial language, it was thought to be original and authentic, a pure sign of Greek-ness.
6. The Athens Trilogy, also known as Neoclassical Trilogy, consists of the Athens University (1864), the National Library of Greece (1902), and the Academy of Athens (1885). The former has been designed by the Danish architect Hans Christian Hansen, while the others are by his brother Theophil Hansen. The Trilogy's buildings are the best known landmarks in Athens city centre.

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The book entitled *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City* (2017) that we co-edited with visual sociologist Myrto Tsilimpounidi is, in a sense, the result of the *No Respect* events. I've been actively involved in the selection process of the scholars for the *(Dis)respectful Creativity* conference and the majority of them was invited to participate in this publication. The collection consists of fifteen original contributions from experts in the field examining the reciprocal relationship that graffiti and street art share with contemporary urban environments in various contexts around the globe. The edited volume questions how we *read*, *write* and *represent* graffiti and the city, and it is structured around these three key concepts.

As principal editor I've co-written an extensive introduction on the topic that not only sets the foundations for the emergence of the collection and maps the graffiti scholarship but also contemplates on its potential futures trajectories in relation to urban space, while transcending disciplinary frontiers. The different disciplines represented in the book led me critically consider the various research approaches as well as the modes through which the research is presented. The structure of the introductory chapter follows the traditional stages of graffiti production in order to highlight the similarities between academic and graffiti writing, between writing in space and writing about writing in space. Yet, the restrictions in the formatting of the text raised once again issues related to the nature and appropriate mode of graffiti research presentation. Is graffiti writing or graffiti drawing the most appropriate means to approach the subject in my cases? Or is it a combination of both? What can architectural design contribute to the graffiti research methods and what can graffiti teach us about architectural representation? Ultimately, this series of thoughts regarding the ways graffiti and architectural matrices meet and are represented became central in this dissertation.

Graffiti and street art

Reading, writing and representing the city

Konstantinos Avramidis and Myrto Tsilimpounidi

This is a volume dedicated to graffiti and street art. More precisely, this book is a testament to the multiple modes by which graffiti and street art have changed our ways of seeing, knowing and representing urban environments.[1] Thus, we think it is only appropriate that the structure of this introductory chapter follows the traditional stages of graffiti production. This choice reflects our deep appreciation for the art of wall writing, but most importantly seeks to highlight the similarities between scholarly and graffiti writing: the attentiveness to the words, the placement of the ideas, and the small details when drawing an outline to name a few.

As with every design endeavour or scholarly piece, *first goes the 'sketch'*, which provides the framework and the conceptual position of the volume; this section is the basis for our final product and contains the justification behind our aesthetic and political choices. *Then, comes the 'background'*, which is not just a thing on the back, but the spine that supports a graffiti piece and in our case a detailed historical, conceptual and thematic review of graffiti and street art scholarship. The background is what eventually brings all the different elements of a piece (and of a scholarly volume) together; to put it differently, the background is the conceptual glue between the different parts. Once we have the sketch and the background, we can start *filling in* our piece; this is what would make the piece stand out, giving it substance and depth. In our case, this section exposes the gap in the literature and explains why this volume fills in this gap, what future trajectories it offers and its wider contribution. Afterwards, *it's time to draw the 'outlines'*, this is what connects our piece with the background, and this is the moment when the different letters, scribbles and numbers are taking shape. The moment a graffiti artist draws the outlines is the first time an observer can read the tag/slogan. Here, we draw the outline collectively, as the 'crew' of scholars in this volume is what gives it its shape, uniqueness and value. Finally, once the piece is ready, the artist *adds the final details and signs*; this is what gives a personal touch to the piece, claims authorship and distinguishes it from all the other pieces out there. In our case this comes with a series of details regarding this project, by way of an opening gesture towards the chapters that follow.

Academic and graffiti writing have many similarities and in this era of fast production and consumption of images and texts, this volume offers a pause in order to embrace the art of writing on walls and pages, and the craft of writing about the writing on the walls.

First goes the 'sketch'

> These marks made in public places, called the defacing of monuments, actually put face on an impersonal wall or oversized statue. The human hand seems to want to touch and leave its touch, even if by only obscene smears and ugly scrawls . . . surely, a city is a masterpiece of engineering form and architectural inspiration that would not be despoiled by the presence of images that reflect the 'soul' through the hand.
>
> (Hillman 2008 [1989]: 105)

American psychologist James Hillman's opening quote eloquently outlines the main tensions, inspirations and research incentives in this volume: the multilayered interrelationship between graffiti, street art and urban space. Cities are dynamic, living organisms in which space and people mutually create one another. Graffiti and street art capture these spatio-social interactions between the placing of people and the ways humans inhabit and (in)form their spaces. Thus, seeing the writing on the wall offers valuable insights of the polyvalent character of our urban realities.

'Seeing the writing on the wall' is an expression originating from the Biblical story of Balthazar's feast, where supernatural writing on the wall works as a prophecy for the forthcoming demise of the Babylonian Empire (Tsilimpounidi 2013; cf. Mieszkowski 2010). Therefore, to attribute to someone the capacity to see the writing on the wall implies the ability to know that something is about to happen, usually an inevitable decline or an end. Is this the purpose of graffiti and street art in our postmodern urban environments? To work as prophecies inscribed on the urban surface and to project images and information from the future, or as David Ley and Roman Cybriwsky argue in a similar line of thought 'today's graffiti are tomorrow's headlines' (1974: 491). We move away from the notion of prophecy and fortune telling as we claim that graffiti and street art are valuable research lenses through which to unpack some of the tensions and contradictions of urban life. In this sense, they might work as indications of the tensions that people are facing on the ground, and thus provide insights into a variety of potential futures. After all, surrealism has taught us that the culturally marginal and/or the urban quotidian have the capacity to reveal the unexpected. Turning our focus on the walls and the marks they host is not without dangers, but definitely rewarding. French surrealist poet L o Malet could not have put it more aptly: 'the walls of the city [is] the unlimited field of poetic realisations' (Phillips 1990: 140).

Graffiti writer Boom offers a similar definition of graffiti in his famous tag: 'graffiti is a poem the city writes to itself.'[2] What Boom implies here is that the

production of graffiti comes from the city itself. Other than the personification of the city as the main protagonist and not just a background for our urban stories, what is important in Boom's tag is the poetic relationship between graffiti, social conditions and urban space. Not every city produces that same graffiti and, given its ephemeral character, there is also a deep connection with the particular era even within the same city. For example, the proliferation of graffiti and street art messages during the Arab Spring in Cairo is a testament to the particularities of that moment. To put it differently, seeing the writing on the wall offers glimpses of a particular milieu and those glimpses usually originate from the margins of social production – as what is written on the wall usually contradicts the hegemonic narratives.

A completely different take on graffiti is evident in Robert Reisner's research, where the most usual answer to the question 'what is graffiti?' is 'dirty words on clean walls' (1971: 24). This early interpretation seems to be an interesting entry point on what constitutes graffiti, a statement that sounds so familiar even today. Perhaps the dirt of graffiti is associated with the disturbance of the marginal messages, with the alternative stories that are tagged on the walls. Or perhaps, with the prevailing fixation of the regime of 'law and order' which makes the supporting surface to be understood as clean and graffiti as dirt. A subversive answer to this logic comes from graffiti writers and street artists in Athens, after every major attempt by the municipality to clean the walls the same tag appeared almost overnight stating 'clean walls, dirty consciousness'. Graffiti and street art poetically break the monopoly of messages on the urban fabric, and at the same time open up questions on the nature of public space and the right to the city, but most importantly whose right and to what city.

Graffiti and street art practices inspire media hype, are visually compelling, and have reached almost mythological status among subcultures, art historians and the public. Depending on one's point of view, these two terms are synonyms with vandalism, marginal youth and delinquency, or seen as signs of free expression. What is important in critical analysis is the sense of the constant tension in which the pieces are often seen simultaneously as either social problems, or political acts, or artistic practices. In light of the recent critical turn in graffiti and street art scholarship, we envision this interdisciplinary collection as moving beyond description in order to focus on the controversies within the scene, addressing issues of methodological innovations and the multiple ways graffiti and street art are embedded in the dynamics of urbanism.

The notions 'graffiti' and 'street art' are always mercurial due to the ambiguous and flux nature of the practices they refer to. In their constant attempt to capture the essence and define the meaning of these concepts, scholars end up either distancing themselves from them or inventing new terms to frame these practices (cf. Avramidis 2012), even though they know that a part of graffiti and street art's meaning will always escape definition.[3] Of course, during the process of attempting to understand or redefine these notions, new interpretative opportunities emerge that push the field forward. We, as editors, are not so much interested in defining what graffiti and street art *are* (what counts), but what they *do*.[4] The contributions

in this volume embrace the multilayered nature of graffiti and street art, and thus deliberately avoid a single, fixed and solid definition of these practices. Yet, in terms of clarity, an open-ended definition of graffiti and street art is necessary. Echoing Rafael Schacter (2015), graffiti is a specific type of writing that has its roots in the streets of Philadelphia and the subway system of New York City dating back to the late 1960s. Graffiti is an unsolicited, frequently illegal, act of image-making, usually produced by the use of spray cans. Its focus is usually on words, tags and pseudonyms and their repetitive display on all kinds of surfaces. It is a very loose term, with multiple aesthetic outcomes and practitioners. Street art is, similarly to graffiti, a practice of image-making. Here the difference is the focus which is now on images rather than words, making the 'message' less cryptic and thus its audience more broad compared to that of graffiti. Street art can be produced by spray cans, stencils, posters, photographs or a mix of all the above. It is also an illicit practice, yet in many occasions it occurs as commissioned work, and emerged from the graffiti scene in the early 1990s. The term 'street art' is also often associated with more politically engaged forms of public interventions.

Graffiti and street art have captured a global following in recent years, and the result is a proliferation of tags, paintings, stickers and stencils in slick metropolitan cities as well as unexpected locales in impoverished areas. Part of their appeal is that the forms allow viewers an understanding of the subtext of a city without resorting to mainstream accounts or official histories. They offer an alternative history; a mapping of social trails or subcultural behaviours – a voyeuristic pleasure at entering the story of the city. To put it differently, the proliferation of pieces democratizes the relationship between art and its audiences as it generates an open gallery, allowing the free enjoyment of the skill of the practitioners.[5] As such, they provide a counter-narrative to dominant urban aesthetics. From the famous May '68 tag 'Under the cobblestones, the beach' in Paris, the proliferation of 'aerosol art' in New York's subway in the 1970s, to the messages on the Berlin wall in the 1980s, graffiti provides an elaboration of aesthetic protest and dissent.

Graffiti and street art are simultaneously physical acts and cultural practices. As such, they are spatially and socially bound; they bring together the *material* and the *immaterial*. This paradoxical and controversial nature of graffiti and street art, as well as their relationship to urban space and identities are some of the reasons behind our fascination with these practices. For us the editors, coming from different disciplines, namely architecture and sociology, graffiti and street art become the ideal vehicle in order to unpack some of our common concerns: dynamics of urban space, subversive practices of citizenship and inventive methodologies for the study of urban phenomena, to name a few.

Architecture tends to view graffiti and street art as a threat, even though they share a very special reciprocal relationship. Architecture provides not only the material background for writing – which confines and, in a sense, dictates the material and visual result of the writing – but also its historical and political context – which contributes to what the writing conveys. In turn, graffiti and street art are parts of the life of architecture and constantly change the image and meaning of particular urban places. Despite this conflictual relationship, graffiti and street art

fascinate architects and have a constant presence in architectural representations as well. Yet, more often than not, they play a supplementary role; they are used as signs of a 'vibrant' city and they appear in photorealistic renders to indicate the dynamism of blossoming urban cultures. What often is ignored, however, is the material sophistication, aesthetic dynamism and contextual specificity of these writing genres (Avramidis 2015).

Sociology has its own flirtation with graffiti and street art. These frequently illegal re-appropriations of public space create a spectrum of alternative, and many times subversive, urban representation that expose the untold stories on the ground. To engage with the stories written on the walls offers a polyvalent engagement with urban space, one that does not try to define it but rather invoke it through a range of approaches. Sociology tends to focus on the soft elements of these subcultural practices, in order to unpack questions of youth expression and representations, uses of public space, disaffected communities and the limits of legality of social performances. Graffiti and street art can also affect methodological choices, as they could be viewed as an expression of counter-cultural production on the micro level, as alternative urban diaries projected on urban walls (Tsilimpounidi 2015).

We have envisioned this project for some time and materialized it in June 2014 after a conference that brought many graffiti and street art scholars together in Athens.[6] As such, the cover of the book is both a reference to our initial conceptualization of this edited volume, but also a tribute to the muse of our graffiti and street art explorations: Athens. This picture also reveals a specific attitude regarding the treatment of images that we adopt and encourage in this collection: a careful reading of the singular image; an examination of its relationship with a larger set of images; and an investigation of the ways they function together in different assemblages and specific contexts. Except for some rare occasions, graffiti and street art images that appear on book covers are reduced to generic signs, devoid of any meaning and extracted from their contexts (Chmielewska 2008). The reference to the piece(s) they depict is, at best, exhausted to a single copyright line. In other words, graffiti and street art are often used to seduce and attract rather than inform. Here, the cover image is treated contextually, as a prompt that offers the image what it deserves, or rather 'what it wants' (Mitchell 1996) – i.e. attention.

The cover image is from the Athens School of Fine Arts, a hub of and for graffiti writers and street artists alike. The piece is a product of the collaboration between Athenian artists Greg Papagrigoriou and Simek (aka Blaqk crew), and is characterized by a delicate combination of abstract geometric forms, calligraphy and typography. The letters and forms twist eloquently not only to produce a unique calligraphic mosaic but also to follow the physical patina of the surface. Literally a few metres away from this piece the idea for this volume was conceived back in 2014. Also, the very first lines of this introduction were written there. Yet, this is not what makes this artwork special. Apart from its obvious visual quality and undeniable synthetic sophistication, this piece serves as this collection's entry point. This is due to its capacity to incarnate tensions, open up subjects and raise questions that are pertinent to this volume. For example, is this piece graffiti or street art? Does it matter how we name it, and why? Is this a text, an image,

or both? Is it legal or not? Why this image of a graffito on an abandoned building looks so familiar and stereotypical? Do we ever wonder where this piece is, or do we take for granted that it rests on an abandoned edifice in the middle of nowhere or in a degraded neighbourhood? Would it change the way you see it if you knew that it rests on one of the busiest avenues in Athens? Also, do the artists, by intervening in this particular way in this specific site, aim to promote an aesthetic agenda or do they try to make a political statement? Can any intentional aesthetic public intervention be separated from the political? But, at the same time, how does calligraphy fit in the contemporary Athenian context and how political can it be?

Further, how important is the materiality and history of the surface that supports the writing for both artists and researchers alike? Is there any way to study this piece outside of its context? In this case, which is context: the building, the photograph, or both? And what does photographing graffiti mean after Brassa (2002 [1964])? How do we read the image on the cover: as a graffiti piece or as a representation of a piece? And how does the photographic framing affect what we see and the ways we interpret what we see? How, in turn, is the artwork affected by both the photograph and its appearance on the cover of this collection? Can we examine this piece in isolation, or do we need to investigate it as part of a local network of physical pieces in the city and, at the same time, as a component of a global scene that shares the same aesthetic and cultural characteristics? And is this enough, or do we have to follow how this piece is represented and circulated through various online and offline media, by both the artists and others? Why did artists choose this site and what does their piece do to the place? Can we ever explore this place without referring to this piece, and can we discuss the piece without its place of reference? Is the writing surface merely the background of the piece, or an element without which it would have never have come into being?

Then, comes the 'background'

Today graffiti and street art books are shelved alongside popular fashion photography, graffiti pieces are displayed in important art fairs,[7] collectors spend millions to acquire a canvas or a piece of wall that has the signature of a celebrated graffitist,[8] while, at the same time, artists erase their works from the streets to avoid exploitation and appropriation.[9] In this context, graffiti and street art have attracted academic interest resulting in a burgeoning literature. In what follows in this section, we attempt to outline the work undertaken on the subject to date and show how the scholarship has developed throughout the years. Of course, this is not an exhaustive listing of all the works produced; we focus on the key publications of the field in order to reveal which themes and contexts have been discussed, and identify potential research gaps that this collection aims to either fill in or expand and contribute to.

Graffiti's strong visual appeal and illicit nature, and perhaps a sort of trendiness of the subject that one can witness in general and in academia in particular, have resulted in a surprising amount of books, articles and analyses, especially during

the past decade (cf. Austin 2013). The vast majority of these publications are non-academic and focus on contemporary (post late 1960s) New York style graffiti. These works come primarily from journalists and photographers (Mailer *et al.* 1974; Cooper and Chalfant 1984; Chalfant and Prigoff 1987),[10] and sometimes from the practitioners themselves (Powers 1999) – their main purpose, however, is not to critically engage with the subject but to document the history and development of this writing genre. An early exception is Jean Baudrillard's (1998 [1976]) brief, albeit insightful, commentary that gives a semiotic take to the study of this writing practice. Baudrillard argues that graffiti are devoid of 'content and message', they are 'empty signifiers' due to their self-referentiality, but he considers this to be their actual strength; this 'emptiness' allows them to 'scramble the signals of urbania and dismantle the order of signs' (1998: 81). Yet, this was just a short parenthesis. The tradition of illustrative books of pieces and styles prevailed and continues until today, this time with a global rather than solely New York focus, with publications such as those by Nicholas Ganz (2004) and Rafael Schacter (2013). Of course, these two are not the only ones, but perhaps the most comprehensive and successful to date. On top of these, numerous coffee table books concerned with regional styles from around the world have been published and, of course, a myriad of books on the work of the notorious British street artist Banksy. These first publications created and gradually established a particular tradition regarding the documentation and treatment of graffiti that is primarily photographic, thus marginalizing other potential means of examination that could have opened different research opportunities.

With almost a decade of delay compared to its journalist predecessors, the first academic publication on the subject makes its appearance. Thus, inaugurating what we could call the 'first academic wave' of graffiti and street art scholarship. This belongs to communication scholar Craig Castleman (1982) who, through interviews with graffitists, investigates the early scene of subway graffiti in New York. Castleman argues for the complex relationship of practitioners, authorities and media in the creation of a unique set of communication channels that challenge spatial politics. A few years later, sociologist Richard Lachmann publishes his oft-cited article *Graffiti as Career and Ideology* (1988) which, again through interviews with practitioners, examines the 'deviant careers' of New York's writers that allow them to 'develop a total art world'. Based on one of the key elements of graffiti, i.e. fame, Lachmann paves the way for many studies that will follow. An important, albeit largely ignored, reference is Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik's *High & Low* (1990), a catalogue that accompanied the homonymous MoMA exhibition concerned with the interplay of 'high' modern art and 'low' popular culture. Varnedoe and Gopnik devote a whole chapter on graffiti that traces the aesthetic origins as well as intellectual construction of the artist as public 'scribbler' while comprehensively chronicling how graffiti is intertwined with modern art. Another key article worth mentioning here comes from geographer Tim Cresswell (1992) who shifts the focus of the – still under formation – scholarship from the 'who' and the 'what' to the 'where' of graffiti, an element that he considers to be the most crucial. Based on Mary Douglas' concept 'matter

out of place', Cresswell argues that graffiti writing in New York is transgressive due to its placement 'where' it shouldn't be or doesn't belong, and believes that this practice is paradigmatic of what he terms 'heretical geographies' (1996), i.e. ways of being in space that question the taken-for-granted, everyday normative landscapes.

Despite the continuous and often aggressive 'wars on graffiti', and while the surprisingly persistent 'broken windows' theory still enjoys popularity (Wilson and Kelling 1982), this subculture survives and migrates from the streets of Philadelphia and subway cars of New York to almost every city around the world. There it is transformed and mixed with the historical, aesthetic and cultural particularities of each place. Authors from other regions start examining their local scenes in relation to the particularities of their specific cultural and urban contexts. John Bushnell's *Moscow Graffiti* (1990) concentrates on different subgenres of wall writing, ranging from slogan writing to art produced by various youth subcultural groups, in several cities of the former Soviet Union. Bushnell draws linkages between the local and the global writing scenes, and asserts that the foreign language adopted by the writers not only allows them to open channels of communication with geographically and culturally distant peers but also becomes a tool to resist and bypass their isolation. Political scientist Lyman Chaffee, in his book *Political Protest and Street Art* (1993), a work that did not get the attention it deserved most probably due to its regional focus and the wide definition of what 'street art' might mean, investigates the effectiveness of street art – or what we might call 'protest' and 'activist' art – to act as a 'tool for political democratization' in Spain, Argentina and Brazil.[11] Despite its socio-political approach, this work pays great attention to the visual treatment and placement of writings, and considers street art to be not only a means of low-tech communication in a high-tech era but also 'a record of popular history'. These early studies, which turn the focus away from North America and signature graffiti, demonstrate that the line that divides these wall writing types is thin or even non-existent. They also emphatically reveal the importance of examining these cultural and material practices in their context of production and perception, thus highlighting the need to account for their special historical, social and spatial particularities and meanings.

Authored by cultural criminologist Jeff Ferrell, *Crimes of Style* (1993) is probably the founding publication of contemporary graffiti scholarship, a work that opens the 'second wave' in graffiti literature.[12] In this study, Ferrell focuses on Denver's scene, moving the focus away from his New York-centred predecessors. He follows the discourses surrounding the local writing scene and the campaigns that attempt to criminalize it. In so doing, the author argues, writers and 'moral entrepreneurs' forge a dynamic and reciprocal relationship, and together gradually construct graffiti as a 'crime of style', by both challenging and affirming the power of the 'aesthetics of authority'. Even more geographically and stylistically distant from New York, anthropologist Susan Phillips's work entitled *Wallbangin'* (1999), analyses the cultural and territorial dimensions of gang graffiti in Los Angeles and, most importantly for our current discussion,

introduces useful categories and definitions about various graffiti subgenres. Sociologist Nancy Macdonald's study *The Graffiti Subculture* (2001) is based on subcultural theories and centres the discussion on the expression and formation of the (gendered) identity of the practitioners in London and New York. Historian Joe Austin, in his seminal book *Taking the Train* (2001), traces how New York graffiti was constructed, by the media and the municipal authorities, as an urban problem; while Ivor Miller's *Aerosol Kingdom* (2002) examines, using a more ethnic approach, the development and cultural influences of specific artists as well as the history and various other aspects of the 'aerosol art' movement. Around the same time, a couple of publications initiate a discussion on the pedagogical potentials of graffiti (Rahn 2002; Christen 2003), while others begin to raise concerns about its commodification (Alvelos 2004).

In a sense, the aforementioned publications close the 'second wave' of graffiti scholarship, while paving the way for the emergence of the 'third'. This also historically coincides with the establishment of the 'street art' in the visual sphere. After that time, the number of academic publications grows geometrically. Many scholars join the debate on graffiti and street art, and start critically analysing these practices, something that results in several interesting articles and book chapters. These are mostly theoretical (sometimes over-theoretical) approaches that study graffiti in plural form rather than examining each graffito in its context. In our view, an exemplar exception of this era of scholarship is Ella Chmielewska's context-considerate take on graffiti (2007) and her proposal to carefully approach and critically examine both the temporal dimension of writing and the photographic medium of its documentation (2009), thus opening up new research potentials and methodological paths. During that period, several other aspects of these practices have been examined, such as graffiti and street art's territorial dimensions (Brighenti 2010) and their relationship with spatial control (Keith 2005) and liminality (Campos 2009), or the militarization of urban environments that they invite (Iveson 2010). Also, scholars investigate the connection of graffiti and street art with cultural heritage (MacDowall 2006) and interpret it as digitally archived and constantly flowing information (Bowen 2010; Pennycook 2010). The increasing interest in graffiti in academia is highlighted by the amplified numbers of the recent special journal issues,[13] conferences[14] and courses[15] dedicated to the subject.

One more important publication that deserves to be included in this list of key scholarly works on the subject – despite the fact that it does not focus on graffiti per se but uses it as a case study – is the *Publics and the City* (2007) by geographer Kurt Iveson. The author brings together the material and immaterial dimensions of publics and public spaces through the notion of 'public address', which he considers to be a 'form of visibility' in the city. Iveson explores the scene of Sydney and claims that there is a need to move our focus from the texts on the walls to the 'forms' through which they are circulated. Lisa Gottlieb's *Graffiti Art Styles* (2008) examines graffiti from a completely different angle. Gottlieb uses Erwin Panofsky's iconographical theories and suggests a classifications system for graffiti pieces, while introducing a model that allows us to understand which

graffiti can count for (non-) representational images based on their visual characteristics. Sociologist Gregory Snyder, in his thorough ethnographic study *Graffiti Lives* (2009), investigates the graffiti subculture in New York City. He is primarily concerned with the complex interweaving of style, space and market. Snyder also attempts to counter the misconceptions about writers by putting emphasis on the creative careers that practitioners follow by utilizing the skills they have acquired or further developed through their participation in writing.

In the years that follow, while several works continue to study the history and/or the aesthetics of New York graffiti (e.g. Stewart 2009; a belated publication of his 1989 work), one can witness a new trend in the scholarship. This trend attempts to challenge, rethink and redefine the terms with which the scholars of the field became too comfortable, even though these were no longer able to capture the stylistic evolution or the cultural transformations of the practice in the streets and the galleries (Dickens 2008; Thompson 2009; Wacławek 2011; Irvine 2012). Yet, in general, the key themes examined in the field are the stylistic innovation of graffiti and street, the (sub)cultural dimensions and the identity of practitioners, and the (re)actions that these practices invite, which are often associated with the politics and governance of space (e.g. Kramer 2010; McAuliffe 2012). In others words, the main focus of the majority of studies up to this historical point is on the agents, their motivations and identities rather than on the material artefacts that they leave behind, through which one can reconstruct or invent narratives of the city (e.g. Brook and Dunn 2011). Two recent studies, however, concentrate on both the material artefacts and their representations, thus approaching graffiti as a tool to explore modes of urban critique.

Visual criminologist Alison Young, after many years of study and numerous articles on the subject, in her monograph *Street Art, Public City* (2014) looks at several urban art and mark-making practices but primarily focuses on 'street art' and its 'situational' character. The author explores the ways through which artists manage to reveal a vibrant 'public city', a 'city within a city', that, in a sense, criticizes the 'legislated city' – one that is produced by sets of regulations and is associated to the notions of property and ownership – while also highlighting the differences between graffiti and street art in terms of the criminalization of their image and treatment of the practitioners. In the study *Ornament and Order* (2014), anthropologist Rafael Schacter examines graffiti and street art – or what he calls 'Independent Public Art' – and pays attention to the materiality of these objects/images as well as to the ritualistic performances of their production. Most importantly, Schacter shifts the focus from the cultural to the material impact of this practice.

A parallel set of publications focusing on rock art and ancient graffiti – which is primarily authored by classical studies and archaeology scholars – has also a lot to offer in the study of its contemporary counterparts (e.g. Fleming 2001; David and Wilson 2002; Nash and Chippindale 2002; Oliver and Neal 2010; Baird and Taylor 2011). Even though these two interrelated fields occasionally exchange ideas and methods, up until recently they remained distant from each other.

These works' most important elements are the meticulous contextualization of the case studies and the reconstruction methods they adapt; two aspects that are often missing from contemporary graffiti studies. Another interesting dimension of these studies is the way they represent the inscriptions, i.e. together with the substrate of writing. This is in contrast to some contemporary graffiti scholarly works that represent graffiti primarily photographically and consider it to be a global phenomenon with similar material results and cultural aspects, thus often ignoring the situational, regional and cultural particularities. Further, the ancient graffiti and rock-art studies blur the differences between the textual and pictorial, the material and performative, and account for the context of production and perception of the writing. In other words, they prompt us to look more carefully at the surfaces upon which these graffiti appear. In a sense, these works remind us of what Roland Barthes considered graffiti to be: 'neither the inscription nor its message but the wall, the background, the surface' (1991 [1979]: 167). Yet, the graffiti-related edited collections that recently came out (Lovata and Olton 2015; Youkhana and F rster 2015) demonstrate that the gap between those two research strands, between ancient and contemporary graffiti, has started to be bridged and initiate a new round of productive exchanges. Finally, Jeffrey Ian Ross's *Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art* (2016), which provides an extensive summary and a reflective overview of the current approaches, works as the finishing line of the 'third wave' on the topic; by providing a comprehensive account on the theme, at the same time, marks the end of an era.

Now, let's 'fill in'

We envision that this edited volume would signal the beginning of the 'fourth wave' in graffiti and street art scholarship as all the contributors are mapping new territories by offering fresh and innovative ways of approaching the topic. As such, the volume at hand commences a new wave of literature that not only continues and reflects the invaluable tradition that it inherited and that largely shaped it, but also opens new research possibilities. The goal here is to extend the literature by introducing new scholars, exploring new methods, and investigating case studies and urban contexts from cities around the world that, even though they have blossoming scenes, have not had the chance to be critically explored or commented upon as yet. Prioritizing the visual, experiential and material along with the spatial and political, this volume aims to critically unpack the idiosyncrasies of our urban environments.

Graffiti and street art are often considered as distinct practices, and as such, many of the theoretical, methodological and empirical connections between artistic/subcultural practices are lost. Thus, by including the range of forms considered under these terms, we want to include the grit, the 'beef', the territoriality that are concomitant with writing on these art practices. We hope to explode some of the definitions that delimit which practices 'count'; and we are looking to push some of the creative form inherent to the practice into the modes of writing about graffiti and street art.

Our contributors are from urban studies, architecture, sociology, criminology, geography, anthropology, cultural and visual studies, as well as scholars that transcend traditional disciplinary frameworks. This mix is about fertile conversation across disciplines. Moreover, the constructive dialogue moves also across geographical borders as the volume includes contributions spreading from South and North America to Europe and Australia. This allows the volume to work as a map for current and future researchers and practitioners.

The edited volume aims to:

- be the first systematic collection of original, critical scholarly works that explore issues related to contemporary urban public writing;
- offer context-considerate case studies grounded in different social, cultural and urban settings in order to highlight how this global phenomenon is localized and how local practices contribute to the perpetuation of the global scene;
- bring together scholars from various disciplines to not only identify the points of convergence they share, but also examine, or rather encourage and enhance, the potentials of methodological exchanges;
- encourage new ways of thinking about the field and the possibilities of destabilizing current research methods;
- explore the position of academics with their research subjects and the implications that this might entail for a sensitive research subject such as graffiti and street art.

The contributions of the edited volume focus on specific and situated instances of graffiti and street art in their spatial, social and political contexts. In terms of scale, they range from the examination of a specific artist or an event and a web platform to a piece or a local scene in its urban context. Case studies from the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Brazil, among others, seek to reveal the plurality of the uses of graffiti and street art around the globe.

The aim of collecting context-considerate analyses that investigate how graffiti and street art are read, written and represented, is to reverse the current trend in the field, i.e. over-theorizations and generalizations, and move a step further, not by applying methods but, rather, by inventing them. The contributions intend for the physical objects, actual subjects and representational material to speak for themselves. The edited volume incorporates theories and approaches that shed new light on these phenomena and it has a balance between theoretical, methodological and empirical chapters.

Given the unique nature of graffiti and street art as both physical acts and cultural practices, as local and global at the same time, as polemic yet context-dependent, we are looking to elaborate these phenomena through a set of three distinct, yet by definition interwoven, key frames: *reading*, *writing* and *representing* graffiti, street art and the city. The concept '*reading*' moves beyond the purely linguistic understanding of the text in the city and the city as text, and is seen here as both

an interpretative process and a dynamic act of creating new nexuses of meaning: a 'reading anew' that makes links between graffiti, street art and the city and identifies their relationships. The notion '*writing*' is, first and foremost, an allusion to the etymological roots of graffiti which puts emphasis on the action of the practice. The contributions addressing this concept concentrate on the actions of writing in space and writing about writing in space. '*Representing*' proved to be the most difficult to define, as its understanding varies considerably among different disciplines and individuals. The treatment of the notion here ranges from actual representations of graffiti, street art and the city (e.g. in novels or online environments) to what they represent; in other words, it is seen both as a representation of and representing something.

Individual chapters can serve as valuable stand-alone resources, yet, the volume is structured as a *narrative* that covers all the stages of graffiti and street art in relation to the city: from the production, documentation and dissemination of the pieces to the reactions, criminalization and their removal.

Time to draw the 'outlines'

The sequence of drawing the outlines of a graffito is never random; nor is the sequence of the chapters in this volume. Each part includes four papers full of rich data from a variety of urban contexts and closes with one position piece that offers a series of provocations and, in that sense, maps out territories for future investigations.

Part I of this collection, *Reading graffiti, street art and the city*, considers how graffiti and street art are perceived and treated in various domains, disciplines and fields – such as the academic world, the art establishment, campaigns, cultural and educational institutions, city authorities, activist groups, legal systems. This section considers how distinct perspectives 'read' the processes and products of artists in order to raise some key questions about public space, agency, artistic merit, criminalization and relation with property. The chapters in this section map, and critically reflect upon, the reactions that graffiti and street art invite and explore the iterative formation of the subculture of writers/artists.

The opening chapter by Jeff Ferrell, *Graffiti, street art and the dialectics of the city*, eloquently maps out the existing scholarly territories; his approach is underpinned by a recognition of the politics behind the act of wall writing. This chapter is the entry point of the volume, as it carefully unpacks issues and opens up research trajectories that many of the following contributors reflect upon or extend. Supported by specific cases, Ferrell identifies the dynamics of graffiti, street art and the contemporary city as a series of 'four unfolding dialectic tensions: crisscrossing between legality and illegality, visibility and invisibility, art and action, ephemerality and elongation'. As he claims, in the street, the dynamics of the contemporary city 'are encoded in the dialectics of its art; to read one is to read the other'.

Alison Young's chapter, *Art or crime or both at the same time? On the ambiguity of images in public space*, focuses on the ambiguous nature of images

in public space and investigates the difficulties of reading illicit imagery and the consequences that this entails. More specifically, she explores the contradictions arising after the cultural legitimation of street art in combination with the harsh prosecutions for graffiti, while suggesting that the division between these two is no longer adequate to grasp the complexity of images in public spaces. Examining closely specific cases in cities such as New York, London, Berlin and Melbourne, Young touches upon the delicate theme of cultural appropriation of certain practices and the limits between legality and illegality. She unpacks the complex relationship between spectator and urban image, and at the same time poses questions of authority over urban aesthetics and public space.

In the third chapter entitled *Reading between the [plot] lines: framing graffiti as multimodal practice*, Samantha Edwards-Vandenhoek uses specific photographed examples from Melbourne and Sydney to test a multimodal and intertextual reading of graffiti. The aim here is to expose 'plot lines' otherwise inaccessible and to poeticize – without romanticizing – places through the reading of their writings. Edwards-Vandenhoek proposes an outline of an interpretative framework developed to navigate the complexity of this material. The photographic framing intermingles with a discussion of Shanks's 'archaeography' and Barthes's twin concepts of the 'studium' and 'punctum', which are the main theoretical vehicles in approaching graffiti as a multimodal practice.

Sabina Andron, in her chapter *Interviewing walls: towards a method of reading hybrid surface inscriptions*, takes us to the streets of London where she conducts 'interviews' with particular surfaces. In so doing, Andron proposes a new 'reading' method to expand our understanding of unsanctioned inscriptions as situated graphic marks, and explores their relations to sanctioned inscriptions and surface environments. In a similar fashion to Edwards-Vandenhoek's work, Andron examines signs holistically and introduces the term 'hybrid surface inscriptions' which encompasses all sorts of signs on the walls, including, but not limited to, graffiti and street art. Using the concepts of 'semiotic' and 'linguistic landscapes', Andron shows how unsanctioned inscriptions, such as street art and graffiti, make use of and interact with their sanctioned counterparts (e.g. advertising and street signage), and prompts us to examine them together.

Kurt Iveson's *Graffiti, street art and the democratic city*, offers a provocative reading of graffiti and street art practices as openings towards the creation of a more democratic city. Iveson rereads graffiti and street art not merely as 'confrontations with' authority but rather as 'assertions of' alternative forms of authority. Then, he considers both the authority of 'the authorities' and the alternative authority enacted by writers and artists in relation to a model of democratic authority and, in so doing, challenges some of the well-established stereotypes on the notions of public space and urban belonging. Finally, Iveson introduces four fresh graffiti-related approaches that he considers capable of enacting and contributing to a more democratic and equal city, namely policy advocacy, permission, participation and publicization.

Part II of the book, *Writing graffiti, street art and the city*, positions the intentions, logistics and embodied nature of making pieces as examples of art

interventions that make sense of urban spaces. The contributions here relate to the particularity of the form as a process. Of great importance in these chapters is a sense of aesthetics and styles, spatial tactics, language used, urban settings, materiality and locality. Yet, there is also the need to engage with the problem of writing *about* graffiti and street art and some of the chapters here engage directly with these practices *as* methodology. The section also outlines different contexts in which graffiti and street art can be found and considers the relation between graffiti, street art and contemporary 'creative' capitalism.

Rafael Schacter opens this second part of the book. In the chapter entitled *Street art is a period, PERIOD: or, classificatory confusion and intermural art*, he addresses the problem of writing about graffiti and street art, by identifying a classificatory confusion in the way these two terms are used by practitioners and scholars alike. Schacter claims that the term 'street art' is no longer capable of grasping the works produced today in the streets or the galleries while arguing that it was a 'period'. In lack of adequate terminology, he coins the term 'intermural art' in an attempt to describe, categorize and organize graffiti and street art. Schacter engages with the difficult task of arrangement and laying out, while at the same time he recognizes and embraces the complex, dynamic and contested nature of graffiti and street art that goes against fixed categories.

In the next chapter, *Expressive measures: an ecology of the public domain*, Andrea Mubi Brighenti adapts an ecological approach to explore the manifestation and significance of urban practices in the public domain. He contests the trend of street art and, to a lesser extent, graffiti to function as conveyors of 'urban creativity', a notion that, despite its ambiguous and fuzzy nature, in recent years has not only gained momentum and legitimacy but has also been projected on and linked with these practices thus transforming them into tools of economic growth. Brighenti insists that 'creativity' has become a major asset in contemporary capitalist valorisation processes, and proposes a more critical reading of these value-creation circuits through the notions of 'expressive measure' and 'artful material'. This highlights the division between creativity and expression, and, in a sense, challenges how we write about and think of graffiti and street art in the city.

Dead ends and urban insignias: writing graffiti and street art (hi)stories along the UN buffer zone in Nicosia, 2010–2014 by Panos Leventis, offers an urban walk in the streets of the buffer zone in the walled city of Nicosia. Here, the writings on the walls become the material to write short fictional urban stories. In other words, Leventis writes about writings as he voyages through the city. In this chapter research and narrative parts, images and texts, facts and fictions, are creatively interwoven. As he travels us through the city, Leventis poetically unpacks the different layers of the urban fabric and the social conditions based on which graffiti and street art images acquire their meaning. Leventis treats graffiti and street art as agent provocateurs in his evocation of the tensions and contradictions of Nicosia.

In the next chapter we move from Cyprus to the culturally and geographically neighbouring Greece. In *The December 2008 uprising's stencil images in Athens: writing or inventing traces of the future?*, Stavros Stavrides detects the traces of

the 2008 revolt in Athens through an analysis of the boosting street art scene during and after the uprising. Stavrides, whose corpus consists of protest stencils, introduces the notion of 'invented traces' in his attempt to interpret the different ways street art appropriates and transforms the official city. For Stavrides, the street art pieces from the revolt are traces meant to performatively recall a shared memory-in-the-making and a call to action. These stencils are neither writings nor representations but 'images-as-presences' that aim to contribute to a collective redefinition of urban public space; they are the ideal vehicles to unpack the changing relationship between city spaces and an urban populace in search of its identity in times of crisis.

Remaining in the Mediterranean region, Mona Abaza's *Repetitive repertoires: how writing about Cairene graffiti has turned into a serial monotony*, focuses on the scene of Cairo in the context of the post-January 2011 revolution. Here graffiti not only reflects the conflictual socio-political condition, but also responds to its exploitation, thus transforming urban surfaces into channels through which writers communicate their distrust towards those who attempt to capitalize on their work. Framed by Bourdieu's theory of the 'cultural field', this chapter critically examines the situation in which artworks are produced, circulated and consumed. Abaza investigates the active role that cultural institutions and individuals (including academics) play in the commercialization and commodification of the local graffiti scene. By engaging dialectically with this complex network of 'players', she exposes its ethical paradoxes, while questioning both the role and the position of those involved in this 'field'. Abaza raises concerns about the overconsumption of Cairene graffiti as a research subject – which tends becoming repetitive and monotonous – and invites us to consider how we, as researchers, affect the very nature of graffiti and the ways it manifests in urban settings.

The accent in the chapters of the final Part III of this volume, *Representing graffiti, street art and the city* is on the ways graffiti and street art are represented and circulated, and examine how this influences these practices. Contributors here investigate how, why, and with what impact graffiti, street art and the city are represented in media, whether popular or mass, online or offline. This section moves beyond locatedness to the diffuse dissemination of pieces, and critically unpacks the relationship between practitioners and a whole ensemble of professional figures (fans and promoters, journalists and politicians, etc.).

The opening chapter of this final part of the volume concentrates on Latin America, and more specifically the rich and stylistically unique scene of S o Paulo in Brazil. Alexander Lamazares, in his contribution entitled *S o Paulo's pixa o and street art: representations of or responses to Brazilian modernism?*, uses as a starting point de Andrade's modernist concept 'cultural cannibalism' – a symbolic metaphor and theory of cultural hybridity that permeates Brazilian modernist thought, upon which national identity was built and aesthetics was formed – to explore S o Paulo's pixa o and street art as a means to critically engage with its postcolonial position. He examines local graffiti as responses to a series of urban conditions that emerged from the modernist project: segregation, anonymity, monotony and verticality, among others. Investigating the special visual

treatment of Paulistanos' public interventions locally and globally, Lamazares sees these as representations of the national identity that is based on modernism. Pixa o challenges modernism and is presented as a dystopian representation of its failures, while street art is welcomed as it is seen as a continuation of the modernist project, representing a local and national pride.

The next chapter transfers us to the North regions of the American continent, in particular to the Canadian capital. In *Defensible aesthetics: creative resistance to urban policies in Ottawa*, Deborah Landry offers a representation of the eradication of graffiti and street art in Ottawa, as an entrance point to the discourses surrounding the right to public space and the hypocritical municipal attempts for a 'secure' city. Her ethnographic study provides first hand insights and reports from the 'front', i.e. both from the streets and the rooms where the meetings among representatives of the city take place, whose policies will eventually affect how graffiti shapes and is represented in the city. Despite city officials' alleged support for urban art, their primary concern is the promotion of a particular aesthetic agenda that can be 'defensible' to the city council. Landry aptly argues that 'irony is a key feature of graffiti' and as such the constructive and scholarly value of ironic critique is utilized as a key element throughout her contribution.

Lachlan MacDowall's *#Instafame: aesthetics, audiences, data* takes us from the physical to the digital world in an exploration of the ways through which graffiti and street art are represented as digital objects, deeply informed by the particularities of digital platforms and the online responses of the users. MacDowall focuses, in particular, on the rise of *Instagram* as an online digital platform that transmutes graffiti and street art into data. By comparing small (local) and large (global) data, he presents the dialectical relationship between the physical and digital in this subcultural context. In so doing, he proposes a different conceptualization of what (the representations of) the 'city' might mean in an era characterized by the pervasive presence of social networking platforms: 'a scenic backdrop for the production of digital content', as he puts it. MacDowall offers glimpses into the complex ecology of formats and feeds in which graffiti and street art exist and the potential of data-driven analysis for representing the global flows and fault lines of style and taste.

We remain detached from the physical reality and this time we move to fiction, as the accent of the penultimate chapter is on a novel that refers to graffiti and street art in Madrid, Spain. Stephen Luis Vilaseca's chapter *Representations of graffiti and the city in the novel El francotirador paciente: readings of the emergent urban body in Madrid*, combines textual criticism with social analysis and provides a fascinating mix of real urban aesthetics and socio-political issues with fictional characters from P rez-Reverte's novel *The Patient Sniper*. By doing this, he blurs the limits between fiction and reality in an attempt to expose the obscurifications of the battle over public space and the restrictive policies related to the neoliberal city. In the polemic representation of graffiti and the city in the novel, Vilaseca diagnoses the potentials of an 'emergent urban body' in Madrid, namely a collective – constantly in the making – body that street artists are modelling in and with the city, that seeks a new type of symbiosis with the urban environment.

The last contribution takes us back to the birthplace of contemporary graffiti, New York City. In *Long live the tag: representing the foundations of Graffiti*, Gregory Snyder concentrates on the most elementary, misunderstood and hated form of graffiti writing – the tag. Snyder identifies that the 'tag' is often seen as a representation of illegality and focuses on an emblematic legal piece executed with 'illegal aesthetics', i.e. with tags. In so doing, he exposes the contradictions associated with the production and perception of graffiti, and questions the simplistic polarities through which graffiti is frequently thought of (e.g. legal vs illegal, art vs vandalism, etc.). Snyder's chapter is structured in a similar way to the volume that hosts it, thus underlining once again how inextricably linked the key concepts of this collection are. For Snyder, the tag represents the foundations of this writing genre: everything begins and finishes with a tag.

Adding the final 'details' and 'sign'

When we started this collection, we had to make some choices on what to include. As with graffiti and street art production, it is impossible to capture, document and present all the themes, voices and academic production on the topic out there. After all, this is a collection and as Jean Baudrillard said, the 'miracle of collecting' is that 'what you really collect is always yourself' (1996 [1968]: 91). Thus, we are aware of the subjectivity behind our choices and, at the same time, we feel that it would be hubris to even imagine claiming that we hold any blueprint of objective inclusion and representation of the field.

As we put the final details on these pages back to the place where all this began, in the Athens School of Fine Arts, we struggle with our positions as scholars, writers, and (street) activists, but somehow feel connected to all these spectrums of our identities. Yet, in this space right now the academic self has to write the grand finale as the sound of the spray cans is approaching.

So, dear reader, here's our last provocation: someone at the edge of your city is writing on the wall. These visual markers of the shifting discourses of power struggle, authority over public space, and counter-cultures established a new paradigm of urban aesthetics. This transformation of walls into urban diaries offers glimpses of the 'soul through the hand' as the opening quote by Hillman suggests. It is in this light that graffiti and street art are remapping the city, and teach us that urban realities are never single but multiple, and if you follow the tags you might end up in a space where playfulness, desire and hope are not only permitted but necessary.

The emergent feelings aroused by the proliferation of marks, scratches and statements provide a sensation of the kind of affective landscape that is mapped across by the political and social conditions. This volume is an interdisciplinary journey into this affective landscape created by graffiti and street art in different social, cultural and urban settings. It is a journey without a final destination, no fin-de-si cle for us, urban dwellers in search of the writing on the wall. Enjoy the ride.

Signed. The editors.

Notes

1 Graffiti and street art, of course, are not merely urban phenomena as writers and artists intervene in various other locations, such as highways, trains, etc. In this edited collection, however, we limit the discussion to the urban manifestation of these practices but keep it open to include the products stemming from the city.
2 An image from Boom's famous tag is available at: http://graffquotes.com/search/the+city+is+a+poem. Accessed: 20 December 2015.
3 For a detailed genealogy of the definitional attempts on graffiti and street art see Ross 2016.
4 The need for this shift of focus has recently been raised, most notably by Jennifer Edbauer (2005) and Sonja Neef (2011) in the context of graffiti and street art as eventful, situated and performative mark-making practices (cf. Avramidis 2014).
5 In this case, skill does not only refer to the artistic capacities of the practitioners. Sometimes it is exactly the absence of artistic skill as defined in fine arts schools, that makes the work interesting and multilayered.
6 This edited volume consists of three interconnected parts that have arisen from the last global summit of graffiti and street art hosted by the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens (6 June 2014), which was facilitated by Konstantinos Avramidis.
7 The collaborative showcase 'Bridges of Graffiti', held in the Venice Biennale (9 May–22 November 2015), is emblematic of this trend. The exhibition was accompanied by a book show that attempted to reconstruct the history of publishing in graffiti. Over 140 titles were on display, the majority of which were non-academic. Available at: www.thebridgesofgraffiti.com/bookshow-info/. Accessed: 20 December 2015.
8 Famous Hollywood couple 'Brangelina' spent £1 million to acquire a Banksy in an auction (Brennan 2007). For more on wall removals and trade of street art see Bengtsen (2014) and Young (2016).
9 Famous Italian street artist Blu erased all the murals he painted in his hometown Bologna in the past 20 years to resist to the promoted commodification of his work. For a detailed report see Caprioli 2016.
10 Mutatis mutandis, the equivalent of Mailer *et al.*'s work (1974) in the context of London is Perry's book (1976) which was, however, less influential.
11 For another study that researches the political dimension of street art in Latin America, see Ryan 2017.
12 The 'first wave' focuses primarily on what graffiti *is* and how it is the expression of dissatisfied youths, while the 'second wave' concentrates on what graffiti *does* especially in relation to urban space and began in the early 1990s.
13 See for example the following special journal issues: Iveson 2010; Lennon and Burns 2013; Samutina and Zaporozhets 2015; Neves and de Freitas Sim es 2015.
14 Examples of recent conferences on graffiti and street art include, but are not limited to, the following:

GraffiCity: Materialized Visual Practices in the Public Urban Space. Cologne: University of Cologne. 17–19 April 2013.
Street Art in the Changing City: Theoretical Perspectives. Moscow: National Research University, Higher School of Economics. 7–8 June 2013.
(Dis)respectful Creativity: The Impact of Graffiti & Street Art on Contemporary Society & Urban Spaces. Athens: Onassis Cultural Centre. 6 June 2014.
Street Art and Urban Creativity Conference. Lisbon: University of Lisbon. 3–5 July 2014.
Graffiti Sessions. London: University College of London. 3–5 December 2014.
Philosophy of Street Art. New York: Pratt Institute. 5–7 March 2015.

15 Examples of academic courses on graffiti and street art include, but are not limited to, the following:

Word Collector at the McGill University, organized by Angeliki Sioli. Available at: www.mcgill.ca/architecture-theory/curriculum/masters/preparation.
Text and the City at the University of Edinburgh, organized by Ella Chmielewska. Available at:www.interkultur.eca.ed.ac.uk/courses_new.html.
Street Art at the University of Melbourne, organized by Lachlan MacDowall. Available at: https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/CCDP20001.
Graffiti and Legislating Aesthetics and *Graffiti & Governance* at the University of Ottawa, organized by Deborah Landry. Available at: www.pedagogmob.com/laws-3903.html; www.pedagogmob.com/crm-4310.html.
Graffiti as a Medium of Communication at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, organized by Małgorzata Sławek-Czochra. Available at: https://e.kul.pl/qlsale.html?op=10&zid=409747&oz_lng=2.
Special Topics in Art & Society: Graffiti and Street Art at the University of Concordia, organized by Anna Wacławek. Available at: www.concordia.ca/finearts/art-history/programs/undergraduate/courses/archives/2011–2012/summer-july/graffiti-street-art.html. Accessed: 20 December 2015.

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