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2007

## Visibility 600 metres: reflections on the national monuments of the Turkish republic of Northern Cyprus

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**VISIBILITY 600 METRES:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL  
MONUMENTS OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF  
NORTHERN CYPRUS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the  
award of the degree

**DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS**

From

**UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

By

**MEHMET ADIL BA, MVA**

**FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS**

**2007**

## CERTIFICATION

I, Mehmet Adil, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Creative Arts, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Mehmet Adil

19 December 2007

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	i
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	ii
<b>PREAMBLE:</b> note on place names and language use .....	v

### VOLUME 1

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: sources, traces, and currents</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Topic .....	2
1.2 Approach to the doctoral research .....	8
Analysis of monuments and ‘landscapes’ .....	9
Visual data and sources .....	13
Visual experiments .....	16
Reflexivity .....	17
1.3 Structure .....	18
Interdisciplinary research .....	20
 <b>CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND ON CYPRUS:</b>	
<b>Turkish Cypriot historical themes - an interpretation</b> .....	<b>21</b>
2.1 Anchored ship – geography and history .....	23
2.2 The rhetoric of the day to day – the solutions of nationalism .....	26
2.3 Boundary markers – symbolic geographies .....	29
2.4 Sources of imagery – historical meta-narrative .....	32
2.5 Visibility .....	36
a. Independence .....	37
b. International affairs .....	38
c. Public symbols of (political) identity .....	42
2.6 Imagery, Memory, Identity .....	50
Parade – a memory and a question .....	52
Family pictures .....	54

<b>CHAPTER 3: TRACING TURKISH CYPRIOT NATIONAL MONUMENTS .....</b>	<b>57</b>
Commemorative Forms .....	57
Forms of memory.....	61
Visibility .....	68
3.1 Monuments and memorials in the Turkish Cypriot arena .....	71
Memorials .....	71
Monuments .....	73
Text and Image .....	74
3.2 Arrival of Turkish national monuments .....	77
Transition and the first figure 1953 .....	77
National forms – the monuments of 1963 .....	80
The period of the busts and silhouettes 1963-1973.....	86
3.3 Patterns of monument and memorial building in TRNC – overview.....	92
Periodicity .....	94
International monumental form .....	96
 <b>CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY: The Limasol-Girne Martyrs and Independence Monument .....</b>	 <b>102</b>
Introduction .....	102
4.1 Inception and opening – placing the object .....	106
4.2 Debating the monument .....	111
4.3 Location and landscape .....	113
Accessibility – a note on the L-G monument’s social life .....	115
4.4 Structure, orientation, material .....	118
Outline of changes in North Cyprus society 1999-2005 .....	119
Materials and forms .....	122
The centrepiece .....	123
The pillars .....	128
The sculptures .....	128
Texture, touch and reality .....	132

4.6 Engaging national imagery .....	135
4.7 To summarise – who is the L-G monument addressing and what does it want? .....	139
<b>CHAPTER 5: PRACTICE AS RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>145</b>
5.1 Research in practice – locating the working area and concerns.....	145
Approaching the art investigation and experiment.....	151
Material’s potential as ‘method’ .....	153
Thinking and making .....	155
Intentionality in art – processes of exhibition .....	160
More on Art and Life .....	164
5.2 ‘Silver Things’ – the experiment .....	167
Material, forms .....	167
Process .....	169
Main stages of the intervention .....	172
Self-presentation, memory, invention, exhibition .....	175
5.3 Exhibition: <i>Visibility 600 Metres: between stillness and flux in the garden of the</i>	
<i>House of Envy</i> .....	179
Genealogy, traces .....	181
TOHHOT – exploring dialectic process visually .....	182
Materials – narrative, change, memory .....	188
Summary – drawing together .....	189
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>VOLUME 2</b>	
Note on contents .....	196
<b>PLATES .....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>DVD of Exhibition <i>Visibility 600 Metres: between stillness and flux in the garden of the</i></b>	
<i>House of Envy</i> .....	259



## ABSTRACT

This Creative Arts doctoral project has engaged visual arts practice and academic investigation of national monuments in North Cyprus as complementary kinds of research via an exploration of material memory in relation to objects in the everyday surroundings.

With regard to the decades-old intercommunal dispute in Cyprus, indications are that there are enduring habits of representation that both signal and participate in the non-resolved nature of the situation. Without the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot groups establishing for themselves the links of interdependency between how they represent each other and how they represent their own identities to themselves, they have yet to be fully engaged with respect to the history of antagonistic differentiation that they have participated in.

The monumental commemorative forms in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are approached as visual elements in the everyday environment, ordinary yet extraordinary as objects condensed out of the flux of events, culture, memory, and experience in an interplay of the visible and the invisible. In this context it is proposed that Turkish Cypriot history be seen as a discursive interplay of presence and absence, where the subject is the people themselves, in which the national monuments began to appear at a particular point in time and continue to do so both as symbolic and concrete form and counterform in an on-going discourse.

The visual arts practice stream of the research involved enquiry into ways of seeing and habits of thought in responding to the immediate surroundings. The artist's own registering processes and thoughts became included as subjects of the explorations, in acknowledgement of a kind of dialectic involving personal (inner) and public (outer) space. In this art practice, the process of realisation and the realised object are active together in the social realm with simultaneous awareness of the individuality of perception, memory, and cognition involved in the interactivity, and the responsibilities therein.

During this project, considerable reciprocity developed between the artistic practice and the academic research. The project makes a contribution to the visual cultural history of the Turkish Cypriot community and of Cyprus more broadly. It may also indicate some avenues of further exploration in research practice in bringing together different ways or kinds of thinking including the visual and artistic.

**Key words:** absence, presence, experimenting, visual art, artistic engagement, dialectic, culture, memory, place, relationality, national monuments, memorials, national identity, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, TRNC, representation, traces, discursive interplay, cultural history, symbolic geography

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## PREAMBLE

### Notes on place names and language usage

Naming can be a complex matter in Cyprus, mirroring its history and historiographies, as reflected in past and present published material. For clarity in reading the thesis, here I briefly outline my usage. Also noted is my approach to transliteration from Turkish into English and to alphabetical listing.

1. Variations for one and the same place in Cyprus may be derived from English, Turkish (contemporary and Ottoman), Turkish Cypriot dialect, Greek (including ancient Greek), Greek Cypriot dialect, Arabic, Italian and Latin. Such variations are found across the range of ‘published’ materials (books, maps, films, internet sites, and so on) both historically and in the present. They are also reflected in contemporary oral usage. The different contemporary versions of place names relate in particular, though not exclusively, to the island’s the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century division into two separate territories, Turkish and Greek. In this thesis I have based my usage of names and place names on the printed versions (oral versions of some places differing markedly from the written).

For Greek names and words I have used the transliterations found in the source and reference materials used. For place names in Cyprus, in the early chapters of the thesis both contemporary names are given, Turkish and Greek. Sometimes for clarity the English version is included as a third version of a name, or used alone. For example, the capital city is widely known as *Nicosia* in English. This is possibly an anglicised version of the Venetian (1400-1500s) name, (Beckingham 1957), whereas the (transliterated) Greek version is *Lefkosía* and the Turkish, *Lefkoşa*. Another example is the well-known harbour town of *Girne* (*Kyrenia*); here the Greek name *Kyrenia* has been assimilated into English and thus widely used in publication. In the present project my main research focus in relation to Cyprus has lain in the Turkish north, hence I generally give the Turkish name first, followed in brackets by the Greek version then the English if included.

2. The letters of the Turkish alphabet are close to the Latin as found in English. There are some accented letters that do not appear in English. I have rendered most of these letters correctly, however as I have not accessed a Turkish keyboard layout there are four letters used here that are not exactly as in Turkish. The non-standard letters I have used in the Turkish are:

- *ş* represents the ‘sh’ sound, normally written with a cedilla under the ‘s’
- *î* represents a letter not found in English, which is an ‘i’ with no dot; the sound however, is very familiar in Australian English, being the back vowel in the last syllable of ‘wanted’
- *ğ* represents the soft ‘g’ in Turkish, pronounced as in ‘weight’ or ‘neighbour’, which is normally written with the sign over the g
- *İ* is the capital ‘i’, which in Turkish retains the dot to differentiate between the two sounds *i* and *î*

In the bibliography I have treated the alphabetical listing as in English whilst retaining the Turkish spelling. Hence letters such as *c/ç*, *g/ğ*, *i/î*, *o/ö*, *s/ş*, and *u/ü* that would be ordered separately in Turkish are treated as the same letter for the present purpose. Pronunciation is not covered in detail here, but one observation I make is that the letter *c* in Turkish is pronounced as the English ‘j’ (as in jump), it is not a ‘k’ sound. The Turkish *j* is pronounced softly as in French. Also the sounds *ü* and *ö* are pronounced similarly to the English ‘few’ and ‘serve’ respectively.

3. In relation to Turkish and Greek author’s names, for clarity of reference in the footnotes I have given surnames in capital letters.

4. Where translations appear in the text, footnotes, plates, and bibliography, from Turkish into English or English into Turkish, unless otherwise indicated the translations are my own work. Translations from Greek to English and English to Greek have been quoted from any sources as acknowledged.

NOTE: internet searches for Turkish words and names can usually be successful using the English letters without the accents.