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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Winchester School of Art

De-mapping Athens as a City in Crisis

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art (Fine Art, Practice-based)

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University of Southampton

Abstract

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This thesis engages in the socio-political and spatial-geographical realities of Athens in the context of a specific period of economic crisis, through a temporal visual reading of the city's surfaces. The overwritten surfaces of Athens during the past couple of decades offer a rich variety of 'traces' that emerge from human interactions with the everyday urban environment. Indeed, the public spaces accommodate and reflect the human echo, transforming the urban sphere into a narrative of the current Greek socio-political context. Slogans, visual and textual representations, graffiti and street art, posters, stickers, and paper mass, all demonstrate a relentless persistence and incessant appearance in the contemporary city. Although an urban writing activity was, in fact, noticeable before 2008 (when the crisis is considered to be started), since then Athens has gradually laid bare a phenomenon of overmarking activity over its surfaces, thereby speaking of a different surface or layer of the city. This new reality has concealed the architectural city structures to such an extent that we may argue that a *derma*, a skin has appeared. Although considerable scholarly research has undertaken studies on Athenian urban activity, it is mostly focused on graffiti, slogans, and street art, covering the subject partly through the linguistic and artistic forms—mere components of the new reality.

The current thesis also attempts to examine the 'general picture', the new urban imagery of Athens as a phenomenon arising from the crisis. A profound tapestry that comprises all the embedded elements (the anonymous trace, the unwittingly made, the non-artistic, etc.) as a unity, a skin, beyond any artistic or linguistic connotations. This research aims to discuss and reimagine the skin as a contested space of socio-political reading and understanding the crisis through an alternative narrative of Greece's contemporary history, visualised on the

city's surfaces. As a derma that succeeds to visualise socio-political history, a surprising emergency to preserve this historic evidence rises and lies in the fact that the official authorities, such as the mayor of Athens, have proceeded to a decisive strategy for a 'clean city', vanishing the traces, and, unbeknownst to him and the authorities, thus getting involved in the development of this skin.

In this thesis, I attempt to promote the skin's controversial and ambitious nature, but also its dominant and omnipresent existence. I also attempt to show that it can function as an apparatus and driving force for contemporary art approaches. This approach will be examined through *theoretical tools* such as *collage*, a subversive formula of providing co-existence to promiscuous elements, *décollage*, a methodology of retrieving past layers of the crisis's evolution, and various bibliographies on graffiti, street art, the urban space as contested space, etc. Also, as practice-based research, I initially engage with periodical fieldwork in Athens, photographic documentation and archiving, mapping, and printing. Central to the practice element is the utilization of novel approaches to expanding the field of print, relying on 3D visualisation software used in documenting the cityscape.

To bring this project to completion, the adopted theoretical approaches from the aforementioned fields of fine art are used to enable the Athenian urban imagery to be seen through a new perspective of a unique 'skin of crisis'. The developed practice of wandering, collecting data, and utilising it on maps and print, is promoted as a way to contribute to potential knowledge as a visual production body of methodology. The derma is the one of a snake that is reborn and reshaped, through socio-political and sociocultural adversity. Its study is shown to be of great importance for the heritage of a city with an immense backbone of historical heritage (Athens), giving way to a novel field research activity to reveal the societal voice through studying the derma of the city.

Keywords: Athens; economic crisis; mapping; collage; skin; cityscape; photography; photogrammetry; printmaking; 3D scanning.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: **Panagiotis Ferentinos**

Title of thesis: **De-mapping Athens as a City in Crisis**

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published as:

Two articles (paper), 1,3; A chapter in a collective volume (book), 2.

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Introduction

My connection with Athens and, especially, its downtown has lasted almost three and a half decades, since my childhood in the late 1980s. A small family house in the very heart of the city centre, in Geraniou str., two roads away from the central square of Omonia, was the initial point from which my association with this city began. Long wanderings with my grandmother, which took place for years, meant that I know every corner in the heart of downtown. My grandmother, acting as a guide, made me aware of the layers that made up contemporary Athens: the ancient, the byzantine, and the most recent monstrous concrete buildings; all these layers merged into a common entity, a temporal mapping of successive historic eras. A palimpsest of traces and fragments that co-exist in the modern city.

This inceptive experience of wandering and observation rendered me capable of perceiving various stages of the metamorphosis of the city itself. The heart of the city centre was even transformed between day and night. During the day, civil services, organisations, shops, banks, offices, etc., all situated downtown, received thousands of people every day, and the centre was lively and vibrant. After nightfall, the silent centre around Omonia Square could be considered rather disreputable: drug dealing, prostitution, purse snatching, street thieving, etc. Some decades later, during the financial crisis in the late 2000s and the subsequent recession, the same energetic city centre would become a landscape of dereliction. However, it would also become a field of struggle and resistance and the site for numerous protests and demonstrations against austerity and precariousness.

The same landscape, deeply affected by the crisis and desertion, would be gradually appropriated with visual marks of any kind. With time, the accumulation of abandoned spaces (walls and surfaces) would trigger their further proliferation and re-imagine the use of space. This breach in the public sphere, as a result of the lack of investments, recession, and long-lasting resistance, brought to light new possibilities of sites for appropriation on their surfaces: urban carcasses covered with panels, derelict buildings, empty storefronts, and deteriorating hoardings with nothing left to advertise (Tulke, 2017, p. 202). Central arterial roads, such as Stadiou Str. (the connection of Omonia and Syntagma Sq.), where previously opulent stores and hotels prevailed, were subject to de-gentrification since 2010; finally, their surfaces were appropriated via an unprecedented marking and writing activity (Canakis, 2017, p. 165). Stadiou Str., one of the central roads where mass protests took place

(Avramidis, 2012, p. 11) during the crisis, also drew my initial attention to document socio-political slogans in my early attempts to capture the public echoes of that time.

The transition to a status of claiming public space as a result of political instability, impoverishment, alongside disinvestment, and de-gentrification may require looking deeper into the condition precedent, namely the pre-crisis period, such as the Olympic Games ‘Athens 2004’. According to Thomas Maloutas (2014), apart from the widespread assumption that the Olympic Games in Athens would have a positive impact on the city’s tourism business and the quality of life of its residents, the occasion was not connected to a specific and extensive strategy of urban and regional planning (p. 27). For Athens, the opportunity of the Olympic Games was completely spent on serving the pretentious image of a contemporary and powerful Greece, which was pursued at all costs (Maloutas, 2014, p. 27). Maloutas (2014) advocates that the opportunity for a decisive gentrification of Athens was missed: ‘The city had to hastily improve its organization, functionality, and image to become eligible for the Games, rather than use the occasion for its long-term and sustainable improvement’ (p. 27).

1. Athens in turmoil and the emergence of the protestor-flâneur

At a research level, through my practice, my association with the cityscape of Athens is firmly linked to an empirical relationship with the city. As I described briefly above, although this connection was always part of my life, it became a conscious decision to develop both my thought processes and practice around December 2008. Since that time, it has also defined my socio-political emancipation and a shared sense of community.

On December 6, 2008, ‘the fatal shooting of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos by the police’ drove people of any age to take part in massive protests; indeed, ‘after a week of riots... the streets of major [Greek] cities turned into virtual war zones’ (Margarinis, 2008). At that time, I and my peers (from various universities) actively participated in those protests. We all shared the same feelings of anger and rage about how a peace officer dared kill pupils in cold blood in the street. This new, sudden, and unexpected condition reminds me of the *Theory of the Derive* and precisely the following passage:

Introduction

In a *dérive* one or more persons drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there.

Guy Debord ([1958] 2006), *Theory of the Dérive*, Internationale Situationniste No. 2, p. 62.

The new protesting *derive* can be summarised in a single statement by the British journalist (of Greek descent) Maria Margaronis (2008): ‘The week of rioting and protest that has left the city [Athens] in shards belongs, above all, to the young.’ Margaronis goes one step further, arguing that we refer to ‘...a revolt of schoolchildren and students, most on the streets for the first time’. This was essential for me as well, given that my participation in demonstrations was minimal until that time. In December 2008, however, a collective consciousness of the youth was shaped on the streets and acted as a unified force of social and political emancipation. Reports of those days even refer to 12-year-old children who rioted over and revolted against the police (Margaronis, 2008). In psychogeographic terms, if ‘the mundane reality of everyday life masks the eternal city that lies beneath’ (Coverley, 2003, p. 57), in December’s 2008 ‘urban conflicts, the city was not simply involved as the set of actions, but urban space and its uses became one of the stakes of the conflict’ (Stavrides, 2010, p. 1).

At that particular juncture, it is of pivotal importance to see how, by producing ‘spaces for public use’, a ‘new culture of public use’ (Stavrides, 2010, p. 9) is shaped simultaneously; thus, a new identity has the potential to emerge. A new ‘fresh’ identity delineated and established by the youth acted as a response to the ‘mapping’ of modern and contemporary Greek identity and continuity engaged in mythical narratives (glorious history), and the past. According to Sofia Voutsaki (2003), ‘modern Greek cultural life appears characterised by an obsession with the past’, and ‘there is undoubtedly a strong sense of continuity in Greece and an almost romantic identification with the past’ (p. 231). Bearing in mind that this new generation came directly after the Olympic Games ‘Athens 2004’, the most recent attempt to revitalise the ancient Greek spirit. Hamilakis (2007) discusses this enlivenment as the most recent event that stresses that antiquity is in direct dialogue with the current Greek identity (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 130). Hence, by dragging up a mythical sense, the contemporary identity was directed or even manipulated. As Plantzos (2008) argues, the

‘idea of continuity in itself [...] was essential to the construction of Greek national identity in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century and has remained in use to date, with no signs of subsiding’ (p. 11). Drawing on this framework, we may realise that there was no direct involvement of everyday people in this particular ‘mapping’ of identity. However, since December 2008 and during the crisis that ensued, direct interference of people in the conditions of their lives has been noted, fighting against austerity and precariousness.

As I mentioned earlier, at that specific time, I also became part of this collective experience taking place on the streets. We unconsciously acted as ‘protestor-flâneurs’, as we all left behind any security and commodities offered by the interior of our houses. That period reminds me of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Man of the Crowd* ([1840] 1996) where the writer recounts how he mentally escaped from the interior of a coffee shop and the indulgences occurring inside, opting in favour of a seductive call from the outside. The indoor delights (cigar, newspaper, promiscuous pleasures, the hotel) dropped their interest once the poet encountered the ‘dense and continuous tides of population’ (p. 388) and ‘the tumultuous sea of human heads’ (p. 389) that pervaded him, even while being behind the transparent vitrine, namely the glass bow window of the coffee house. During the riots of December 2008, the seductive power of a different *derive*, that is, to be a protestor-flâneur, was the ‘invitation’ offered by Athens to be outside, to be part of the historical imperative of that very moment. A fearless curiosity was the driving force that rushed individuals through the crowd, experiencing a sense of collective consciousness, despite more than 4.600 teargas capsules, used by the police only for the first week of December 2008, forcing the government to contact Israel and Germany for fresh stocks (Margaronis, 2008). This curiosity of becoming one with the crowd was described by Baudelaire ([1863] 1995, p. 7) as a compelling, irresistible passion: ‘the mainspring of the genius [of *The Man of the Crowd*] is curiosity’. According to Baudelaire, although the poet [Edgard Allan Poe] is depicted as someone who is looking through the shop window ‘absorbed in gazing at the crowd’, he ‘finally hurls himself headlong into the midst of the throng’ ([1863] 1995, p. 7). ‘December’s [2008] youth uprising’ was one of those urban struggles that ‘explicitly or implicitly targeted urban order’ (Stavrides, 2017, p. 164), for the youth, had the chance to join together in a common place, the street. As Lefebvre ([1970] 2003) argues, the street:

Serves as a meeting place (*topos*), for without it no other designated encounters are possible.... The street is a place to play and learn. The street is disorder....

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This disorder is alive. It informs. It surprises.... In the street... appropriation demonstrates that use and value can dominate exchange and exchange value.

Lefebvre, [1970] 2003, p. 18.

2. How I became a protestor-flâneur

In this alive disorder that informs and surprises (Lefebvre, [1970] 2003, p. 18), 'a collective expressive effort may be condensed' in slogans such as 'reclaim the city', 'take back the city', and 'take back our lives' (Stavrides, 2017, p. 165) about those days. Along with my socio-political emancipation as part of the student collectivity in the streets, my eager interest in photographically capturing those moments directed me to take pictures of the messages marked on the Athenian walls. December 2008 was thus the starting point of how, from then on, I embarked on a conscious connection with the urban space of Athens. Since then, I have kept on recording the city's metamorphosis over the different phases of the financial crisis that ensued after that period. Then, I unconsciously believed that the visualised echoes, inscribed in the very body of the city in the aftermath of the protests and riots, would somehow act as 'illustrations of events that need to be kept in collective memory' for future purposes (Stavrides, 2017, p. 166).

Through my wanderings, observation, and recording for more than ten years, I detected numerous alterations in the public sphere as well as differences from phase to phase of the crisis. By that means, the space itself bore witness to a historic evolving process as the means of an alternative ethnographic narrative. According to Zieleniec (2018) 'space, as a habitat in which we inhabit in our everyday lives, is the product of history' (p. 9). Lefebvre ([1974] 1991) went one step further, arguing that the public space is 'itself the outcome of past actions; social space is what permits fresh actions to occur; some serve production, others consumption... Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge' (p. 72). Without a doubt, at the preliminary stages of my recordings [December 2008], I was not aware of the crisis that the country was heading towards, and that the urban surfaces would unavoidably play a major role in claiming the public space by the citizens ever since. That is why Stavros Stavrides, in an article of his published 9 years after December 2008, in 2017, ponders over 'uprising's stencil images in Athens' as 'writing or inventing traces of the future?' (2017, p.

164). Hence, these markings signalled the precession of ‘an important turning point in the history of urban struggles in Athens’ (Stavrides, 2017, p. 164).

The subsequent crisis of the political system in the years immediately following 2008 and 2009 sparked further economic disorder, whereas unemployment and precariousness increased considerably. In 2010, the International Monetary Fund imposed ‘the toughest austerity measures in post-war history’ on Greece, while ‘Athens was forced to borrow at prohibitively high rates’ (Smith, 2010). The unemployment rate for the youth reached 40%, and the young Greek people were unable to plan an ordinary life, either for the present or the future; after all, ‘they belong to a doomed generation’ (Kouki, 2011). Under those circumstances, ‘this frustration triggered the Greek political and social unrest, which especially in 2011 gave birth to demonstrations, strike actions, occupations, rioting, civil disobedience, and urban turmoil’ (Avramidis, 2012, p. 2). In that time of social and political instability, the December 2008 uprising’s urban traces, which rendered the city a mirror of the conflicts and actively transformed it (Stavrides, 2010, 1), were transmuted as far as their context is concerned. In the subsequent era of urban appropriation, the visual markings on the walls multiplied: ‘their tone of voice changed’, frustration and rage surfaced (Kalofolias, 2013, p. 5). That was unavoidable. The dominant discourse showed contempt for the youth’s cry, which remained suspended in the air as the [crisis’] disaster was on the way (p. 5). The city [Athens] ‘plunged into the vortex that led to the social nightmare we experience today, in the winter of 2013...’ (Kalofolias, 2013, p. 5).

3. From the protestor-flâneur to the nocturnal wanderer

During the same time, apart from the photographic clicks, the wanderings around the city prompted me to think of one more way of expressing the images I was encountering: that of brief writings in a poetic form. Those succinct theatrical ‘bits’ of writing were written on small scraps of paper, fitting in my palm. They were written fast while I was standing up, either depicting the experienced reality or the emotions emanating from an urban encounter. In terms of psychogeography, Coverley (2003) remarks that it emerged from ‘an earlier tradition that celebrated the writer as walker’ (p. 57). In July 2011, I published a book in which a great number of these city ‘shots’ were included. The book was called ‘The Master of “Something so Little”’ («Αφέντης του ‘τόσο δα’»). Its title broached the fact that what we, as human beings, materially possess is meaningless, considering how the crisis impacted our lives financially and materially. Indeed, the homonymous poem illustrates this condition:

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we possess only a bit of paper ‘shredded and dumped... [we are masters of] something about 2.50 x 6.50 cm’ (Ferentinos, 2011, p. 33), implying a used bus ticket kept in our hip pocket. Various subject matters are encompassed in this book, reflecting the general decline of the Athenian city centre (and the city in general) during the first years of the crisis. The indicative range of topics covered is as follows: drug dealing (‘Biological Treatment – “Surface”’, p. 86, ‘Love of Death’, p. 87), homelessness (‘Young-Greek-Homeless’, p. 56); portrayals of people sleeping in cardboard boxes (‘In the Cardboards’, p. 28); citizens beaten during demonstrations (‘Beat us Mercilessly’, p. 34, ‘Peace Officer’, p. 35); the human condition in the big city (‘Breathing-STOP’, p. 15); and so on.

A poem in the book that seems to be indicative of my PhD research realised some years later, is entitled ‘Listen to me [you all]’ (p. 14). Some of its verses state: *Surface!/ I yell. Yes, I yell./ But inside me./ Listen to me./ For one time, see me./ Listen to me.* These verses might imply multiple meanings and convey various messages. However, through the word ‘surface’ the skin of the city speaks up (*I yell. Yes, I yell*) its truths and the inscribed realities. Yet silently (*But inside me.*) via its material existence and omnipresence, it asks for being seen (*For one time, see me.*). Sofia Strezou (2011), in her blog *Aesthetic Analyses of Poets*, goes one step further and links the poem to the new generation of Greeks during the crisis. *According to Strezou, the poet’s call represents the voices of young people; the poet invites the reader to see how the youth are being deprived of their right to their future and have a vision.* It reminded me of the article I referred to earlier, written by Maria Margaronis in December 2008, when we were not referring to a Greek [economic] crisis yet. However, when I came across Margaronis’ article in the 2020s, I first thought that it was written during (or even after many years of) the crisis. Margaronis’ article and Strezou’s analysis intersect. Margaronis (2008) points to the new generation as the ‘€700 generation’, addressing the salaries that the young people expect to be paid back from their degrees. Strezou (2011) refers to a ‘murdered vision’ and the spontaneity of the youth that was choked; the poet’s voice is an outburst against the system and its illusionary promises founded on the debris of a glorified past. This is how, around 2010-2011, I started going deeper into the city in crisis and its realities, both physically and mentally. The immersive experience of the cityscape was the vehicle for a gradual visual (photographic) ‘mapping’ of wider areas of the city, as the crisis was extended in time and space.

4. An initial insight into the mapping of a skin reality

From a cartographic perspective, in '*Live your Greece in Myths': Reading the Crisis on Athens'* walls, Avramidis (2012) introduces a map ['Mapping political graffiti in Athens', 2011, p. 13] making clear that the public 'interventions intensified, both in terms of content and numbers, along central roads where the recent [2012] mass protests took place' (p. 11). According to Avramidis (2012), the actors do not decide their spots at random, yet their messages are intended for specific viewers (p. 11), possibly referring to both the protestors and the unsuspecting passers-by. Thomatos (2013) argues that the walls that are overlaid the most with political slogans are located intentionally in pedestrian zones. Despite promising freedom of movement, these areas ultimately act as links between different points of the city (p. 11).

Obviously, the above references focus on the city centre of Athens and especially on the major arterial roads, given that they have been the locus of people's gathering and political ferment throughout the crisis. Although I carried on being a part of the protests and taking pictures of the visual markings relevant to each political actuality of the crisis (e.g., slogans), since 2010-2011 I have gradually moved towards a wandering practice in deeper parts of the city. The fact that I was living in the heart of Athens certainly played a major role in this. I was neither a visitor who was paying a visit to record graffiti and slogans nor one who was returning to their home after a demonstration. My home was just a few minutes from Omonia Square. Thus, through a consecutive encounter with how the crisis had affected both people and the urban space, I was able to immerse myself in these conditions and gain awareness of how the crisis was contagiously spreading over the city. This reminds us of the Lefebvrian position that 'space is not merely natural or material, a void waiting to be filled with contents. It is socially produced... Every society in every era produces its own space...' (Zieleniec, 2018, p. 6). Since then, my clicks have involved more hidden details of the city that would normally pass unnoticed and escape from our field of vision. Hence, I went beyond the initial focal areas where the mass protests were taking place. I gradually realised and 'mapped' the extension of a skinned form that was steadily covering the surfaces of the city. In this doctoral project, I will argue for the existence of this spatial form, a skin (derma) that produces social space and is shaped through it. Throughout the thesis, I will unfold my argumentation based on my practice, methodology, case studies, and visuals, alongside the discussion of the bibliography.

5. Research Aims

This thesis sets out to assess the socio-political and spatio-geographical realities of Athens in the context of a specific period, that of the economic crisis, through a temporal visual reading and documenting of the city's urban imagery and public surfaces.

It aims to examine the urban traces that witness a persistent presence and unrelenting persistence in contemporary Athens to such a great degree that we may claim that a distinct *derma*, a skin of struggle, has appeared. Towards this direction, through practice-based approaches, a developed methodology, virtual objects-ruins, and maps will attempt to 'map' this tangible and intangible heritage and surface the trace-memory. In other words, how the city writes, reads, and sheds its own cultural memory through a memory skin of the crisis.

It seeks to demonstrate an emergency to preserve this historic evidence as a response to the official authorities (specifically the mayor of Athens) that have moved forward with a decisive strategy for a 'clean city'. A political promotion realised via 'whitewashing' (eliminating) the traces of the crisis. In this direction, art practice as interdisciplinary research will first reassess the city's development as a layering process. Second, the body of work will act as historical, documentary/ethnographic, and urbanist testimony.

6. Research Questions

- 1) How is the value brought to a city that is socially, politically, and culturally reclaimed through struggle, that is expressed via its external surfaces as a means of critical public discourse? Can a counter-hegemonic urban space be recorded and preserved through the written and inscribed traces left behind by its agonistic public?
- 2) Can urban appropriation, in the specific case of Athens in crisis, be examined and finally proved as a unique city skin (*derma*) handled in practice and in theory as an epistemological challenge?
- 3) By grasping the totality and the extension of this phenomenon in time, can art practices as interdisciplinary research act as a generator of historical, documentary, ethnographic, and urbanist knowledge?

7. Research objectives

This PhD project seeks to discuss and reconsider the urban space of Athens as a ‘contested arena’ that may be seen as an alternative narrative of the crisis for further reading and understanding of the current era. Especially in the case of Athens in crisis, this contested space will be examined within the scope of a singular skin, addressing the formation of a distinctive derma over the urban surfaces. Through this skin approach, the project attempts to surface the extension of how the public acts within and interacts with the urban environment (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

For this purpose, it sets out to identify the gap in the literature and exceed the potential limitations of a remarkable scholarship relevant to the crisis and the public visual interventions, especially centred on graffiti, slogans, and street art (Introduction: ‘Forays into theory’, Chapters 1, 2, and 3). Although I rely on this interdisciplinary scholarly research and discuss it further, special emphasis is put on pointing out how the city’s new imagery transcends any artistic or linguistic queries. On the contrary, this research intends to be engaged mostly with the non-artistic visual gestures, the anonymous trace unintentionally engulfed in the ‘general picture’, derma (Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

It seeks to determine this skin through theoretical concepts that both derive from and generate art practices such as the trace, the imprint, the layering, the palimpsest (especially Chapter 2; Chapter 3), collage and décollage (Chapter 6), and so on.

As practice-based research, it aims to introduce a methodology engaging in wandering and periodical fieldwork in Athens, photographic documentation and archiving, mapping, and printing. The employment of innovative methods to broaden the range of image making, based on 3D visualisation software applied to documenting the cityscape, is central to the practice component (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and Appendices 1, and 2).

Apart from the contributed methodology of documentation, it sets out to introduce new visual imagery addressing the ruins of the crisis throughout the cityscape. The new outcomes, as unique virtual objects, attempt to bring to light a singular way of employing the 3D software in favour of glitches of the programme. The aim is to comprise a body of ruins that exist separately from their primary photographic referents and are placed on Google Maps, offering a deeper perception of the crisis as sightseeing on alternative guided tours (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and Appendix 1).

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Relevant to the above objective directed by the practice, one additional objective also emerges. Through this research, the produced body of iconography of the crisis layer and the indicative ruins intend to visually maintain the current historic imperative for future purposes related to identity and continuity (ethnographic, historic, etc.). This is an essential component of the research, given that modern and contemporary Greek culture, identity, and history are firmly connected to the ruins of the past, with special stress placed on antiquity. Indeed, this past debris is located within the same urban sphere alongside the contemporary layer, namely the crisis imagery. Furthermore, there is a biased selection of ancient artefacts for this purpose, at the expense of other epochs and their own ruins-evidence purposes (Chapter 1: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5; Chapter 2: 2.1, and 2.4; Chapter 3: 3.1; Chapter 4: 4.1, 4.1.3, and 4.8; Chapter 5: 5.1, and 5.2; Chapter 6: 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6; Chapter 7).

A final objective is firmly linked to the prior one and foregrounds an important conjuncture for my research, re-imagining the notion of ‘contested space’. Here, the objective seeks to identify a new socio-political dimension. It points out how the official authorities of Athens have decided to eliminate layers of its unfolding, namely the skin of the crisis itself, in the interest of their political promotion. In accordance with this condition, I intend to demonstrate how my project was affected and shaped due to this imperative and, finally, how it can respond to this juncture through alternative wanderings and documentation. Thus, the project sets out to re-address the ‘contested space’, emerged from the decisive strategy for a ‘clean city’, and stresses further the necessity to preserve the resulting urban traces, namely the recent skin (Chapter 1: 1.5; Chapter 2: 2.3, 2.4, and 2.6; and especially Chapter 7).

8. Methodological reflections

Relying upon my own art practice, this practice-based PhD intends to raise and emerge from ‘research *in and through art*’, based on how ‘practical action (the making) and theoretical reflection (the thinking) go hand in hand’ (Wesseling, 2011, p. 2). Going one step further, I will attempt to utilise the art practices as alternative bibliographic sources in conjunction with existing bibliographies and, in turn, contribute the outcomes to the engaged fields and disciplines for further and future research. Besides, this section can be put side by side with the section that comes immediately after, where I set out how my practice was influenced and inspired by the urban space of Athens, shaping my artistic idiom, before embarking on a PhD research project.

Within the framework of this doctoral project, wandering around the city, observation, and field research were the driving forces of this investigation. The body of fieldwork in Athens was attempted within a specific period: from December 2018 to December 2019 (Chapter 4: especially from 4.1.3 on; Chapters 5, 6, and 7). In the course of this time, six fieldworks took place. From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its global outbreak in March 2020, my fieldworks came to a stop. The successive lockdowns restrained any freedom of movement, and restricted travelling from one country to another; even from one Greek prefecture to the other. However, as I mentioned at the earlier stages of the introduction, a greater body (archive) of visuals was composed of collected material from periodical recordings since 2008, which was finally utilised in the current thesis (Chapter 4: 4.1.1, 4.1.2; Chapter 6: 6.3).

According to December 2018–December 2019 field research, the recordings were completed on a periodical basis, with an interval of nearly three months from one to the next. This gap provided the necessary time to detect any registered changes in the derma of the city (for example the case study in Chapter 4: 4.3). The fieldwork often included informative material (e.g., slogans) mirroring specific socio-political events during phases of the crisis (Chapter 4: 4.1.1, and 4.1.2). This mostly occurred in areas close to the main avenues where the protests were taking place. During other periods or in other spots of the city apart from the city centre, the recorded activity bore witness to an equal and relentless emergence of the concept of contested space (Chapter 4: 4.8, Chapter 5, Chapter 7). To be precise, I refer to how a surface and its embedded evidence of activity were whitewashed, cleaned, then reclaimed anew, and vice versa. Here, a limitation of scope may be addressed. I managed to provide proofs from fragmented stages, certainly missing interim information or the exact date on which a visualised act took place. Yet, as far as the skin's development and evidential data are concerned—expansion or reduction, new layers or inactivity, elimination, or rebirth—the periodical fieldwork fitted satisfactorily to preserving it.

One more pivotal question [and possibly a limitation of scope] is brought up, relevant to how I would be able to argue the skin's former relentless existence, before the outset of the doctoral project in 2018. This inquiry was handled with a broadening of the research methodology through practice-based approaches based on visuals. To be precise, I relied on my formerly recorded material, realised on a periodical basis as well. In fact, I banked on my photographic evidence from late 2008/early 2009, namely during the first massive demonstrations that took place in Athens. This material mostly depicted political slogans, spray-painted, and stencilled visuals on walls that were not overloaded at that time. Various

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recordings realised in 2011, 2012, 2014, and some in 2016 indicated an additional stratum of activity: the multi-layered posters that gradually and successively conquered the closed stores affected by the crisis. In 2018, when my thesis started, I returned to some of these spaces to examine their recent condition, mainly due to curiosity at first (Chapter 4: 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3; Chapter 6: 6.3; Appendix 1).

Furthermore, to achieve a broader overview of the Athenian past imagery apart from my own recordings, I sought ways of alternative resources. To gain access to the past, and peel back visual strata of the urban sedimentary stratification, I relied on Google Maps. Google Maps thus functioned as a research medium for an ‘archaeological excavation’ of the crisis’ visualisation, for any corner of the city, besides my former points of interest. This potential of opening a broader unfolding of the city’s palimpsest acted as a ‘de-collage’ process. By retrieving the layers hidden underneath, I also developed my theoretical approach to collage and de-collage, discussing the existing bibliography and contributing a new insight to these two fields of art practices (Chapter 1: 1.2, and 1.3; Chapter 2: 2.2; Chapter 3: 3.3; Chapter 4: 4.5,) Chapter 6, Chapter 7: 7.6, Appendix 2).

During the wanderings, the only apparatus for recoding was the camera of the mobile phone (since 2018 on) and a simple digital camera (2008–2016). At a later stage, based on the collected data, which comprised multiple photographic details (successive or overlapping), I managed to virtually re-produce the documented urban scenes via 3D modelling (Chapter 4: 4.1.3 on; Chapters 5, 6, 7, and Appendix 1). Thus, I aim to achieve an innovative way of using 3D scanning software in favour of image making, practice, and experimentation, as well as further developing of the scanned referents. The problematic of not being able to scan the whole city anytime and anywhere is utilised in support of the production of a fragmented reality comprised of virtual objects-ruins. These new objects can exist as stand-alone visuals beyond their primary photographic depiction of the captured spot in the city.

By that means, another objective is also at hand. The practice-based nature of the research also interrogates the utility and purpose of the deployed software, Photoscan Pro (Agisoft Metashape). To be precise, it addresses ‘cultural heritage documentation’ (Agisoft, 2019) as a potential of the programme, applied in quest of scanning, preserving, and further developing the reality of a crisis, contributing to a new body of its ruins. Agisoft (About, 2019) boasts of providing a tool that is ‘accurate, fast, and stable’. In this research, the aim is to attest to an unstable locus due to the precariousness and recession and produce unique shapes, ‘glitches’, as the ruins of the crisis.

Apart from suggesting a new iconography of objects-ruins, such as virtual ‘sculptures’, I intend to go one step further and interrogate Google’s sovereignty to map our urban realities in exhausting detail. Through a visual response to Google’s decision to visually dominate our everyday lives spaces, I intend to hijack its [Google] Maps and place my own outcomes in city spots (pins), producing my own crisis’ wanderings (Chapter 5: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6). The objective is to emphasise the unnoticed and normally unseen traces of crisis, to which Google pays no conceptual attention at all. In other words, Google is unable to select and distinguish one from the other and dignify traces such as these, offering an insight into their cultural value. Google’s aim is to visually dominate the field ‘in cold blood’, an inanimate decision to document the skin. By hijacking its maps, two goals may be achieved: first, it renders an everyday GIS application a research tool, and second, the outcomes are aimed at a broader public. Indeed, the exported link for each map can make them available and accessible to viewers (‘visitors’) for their own virtual roaming or suggested physical wanderings in Athens itself. Thus, anyone can become a virtual ‘viewer-visitor-flaneur’ from their own devices without visiting a gallery or museum—spaces destined for art exhibitions (Chapter 5; Appendix 1).

This way of storing, showing, and sharing with others Greece’s socio-political actualities inscribed over its surfaces on visitable maps involves a performative practice of visual engagement. Through this virtual wandering, the potential viewer-visitor may encounter realities that would never be advertised in tourist guides. The aim of preserving periodical ephemera and making them available, accessible, and known combines and responds to various of the above-mentioned objectives. Some of them include the following: 1) to render practice and the body of visual evidence the driving force of reading and understanding a crisis (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7; Appendix 1) 2) to maintain testimonies of the current era in direct historic dialogue with past layers; for instance, antiquity, as mentioned above (Chapter 1: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5; Chapter 2: 2.1, and 2.4; Chapter 3: 3.1; Chapter 4: 4.1, 4.1.3, and 4.8; Chapter 5: 5.1, and 5.2; Chapter 6: 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6; Chapter 7); and 3) to provide counter-maps responding to the new strategies of the municipality of Athens to vanish the urban imagery of the crisis (Chapters 5, and 7; Appendix 1).

9. How the city and its urban metamorphosis influenced my practice before heading towards PhD research

In 2004, I moved to the family house I previously referred to, in the very heart of Athens downtown. The everyday life in the city centre at that time (and since then) has acted as an immersive experience in the gradual metamorphosis of the public surfaces. At that time, as a student in my first degree at the Athens School of Fine Arts (Painting, 2002–2007), my decision to express myself mainly with engraving and printing was influenced by this urban metamorphosis as well as my collages. From more conventional printed forms, I moved towards experimental approaches through various techniques and materials, looking for new solutions and perspectives. The initial approach of small, engraved plates and the production of editions (*tirage*) was followed by a freer and gestural engraved drawing on large plates' surfaces (mainly plexiglass and PVC). The single print (monoprint) became my goal, and the matrices were printed through intaglio and relief approaches in combination. In my experimentations, I progressively adopted stencils and the addition of pasted elements or painted papers (*chine collé*), while negotiating relief as well as various textures.

During my second degree in Printmaking (2007–2011), I was gradually led to a wider range of mixed media approaches, mostly relying on intaglio plates (drypoint, etching, carborundum, collagraphs, and *chine collé*). Through these combined attempts and based on the directness and gesture handling of the material (PVC, metal, cardboard, etc.), I end up with a multitude of experiments. In many cases, large etched plates were printed in succession, often two, three, or even four times on the same paper.

Especially during the years of Greece's financial crisis, the emotional charge from the images of the urban space of Athens drastically affected my practice. The photographic document I was collecting, depicting slogans written on walls, tagging, layering of street posters, etc., led me to the instinctive and spontaneous writing on paper, before and during the printing process. I also adopted a palimpsest tactic that stressed successive, multiple prints and included additive or removing (tearing, scratching) interventions throughout the printing process. In July 2011, my degree show for a second degree in Printmaking encompassed a body of print on a large scale, reflecting this palimpsest strategy of printing. The displayed prints were produced through various plates of traditional printmaking (drypoint, etching, collagraphs, etc.), whose outcomes were merged into new entities, resulting in organic realities full of textures and relief qualities. At that time, after 2–3 years

since the outset of the crisis, the existence of distinctive urban imagery proliferating over the Athenian surfaces was highly visible and perceptible.

The experiential association with the contemporary metropolis of crisis, from the photographic lens to engraving and printing, led me to visual interventions in the public space itself. Within the framework of the 1st International Festival of Contemporary Art *RE-Culture 1*, Patras, November 2012, I was invited to intervene visually in an abandoned building in the urban area of Patras. Furthermore, I was invited to curate the street art events of the festival as well. During the same period, I tended to collect material from the walls of the city (e.g., layering of posters), moving towards collaged compositions. Some of these peeled-away city fragments were dealt with as ‘fragment-objects’, acting as stand-alone pieces as well.

Along these lines, a parallel series of works was realised during *INSPIRE 2012*, Visual Arts Festival of Thessaloniki, which took place at the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art in September 2012. During many hours of wandering around the city of Thessaloniki, I was peeling off numerous stratifications of posters and collecting them for further exploitation in the museum’s spaces at a later stage. The exhibited fragments of posters, in the form of collages and ‘fragments-objects’, titled ‘Time and Memory in the City of Thessaloniki’, bore witness to the traces of time and the memory of the city, as they were incorporated in the material layers of the urban imagery of the city.

The acquired experience from mural productions in urban spaces and collecting city material re-emerged in my prints from 2014 onward. Attempting experimental works on a large scale (from three to six meters) prompted me to gradually start working from etching to screen printing. Crossing from a two-dimensional printed collage into installations acted as a vehicle for a spatial, conceptual approach to printmaking, rendering the print a skin that proliferates and conquers the given space. Hence, the given space becomes a ‘container’ for this material, which appropriates it, expands on it, and, in the end, occupies it.

An illustrative example is the selection of my proposal and proposed work for participation in the 1st Cyprus Biennale of Contemporary Art, *Larnaca Biennale 2018*. For the Biennale, the proposed work, ‘Individual Space’, was a print installation (a collage made from silkscreen prints) and was finally presented in two ways during two different phases. In the first stage, the print was shown as a ‘sculptural’ form, expanding across the given space. In the second stage, it was located on the ground in a flat form after a ritual performative procession around the space of the Larnaca Municipal Art Gallery. During this performance,

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the print form was wearable and played the role of protective fabric, or a clothing-‘skin’, before being submitted to further collaging interventions and re-formulation in front of the visitors. This course addressed a ‘loan and reborrowing’ process where the city became the research subject of visual traces and the acquired experience returned to the city again. We thus deal with a shift, from the immersive experience gained in the city to the studio space, back out to the city, and back to practice, back and forth.

10. Forays into theory

Part of the written thesis is to address the research topic from a theoretical angle. Theory by no means functioned as a substitute for practice since a great deal of visual work—which was inspired by and related to the urban space of Athens—had already been produced long before the outset of this PhD project. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier in the introduction, pivotal elements of this inseparable relationship with the city, such as wandering, observation, and photographic documentation, were dealt with in my art course for a decade (2008–2018) before moving towards a doctoral investigation. The intersection of theory and practice in my research may be summarised in Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge’s (2006) argument that theory is a ‘steppingstone in the process of analysing and constructing visual propositions’ (p. 2). The ‘steppingstone’ in my case is how theory led me to a deeper awareness of two fundamental issues: 1) The way the city itself was unfolding its story on its surfaces, through its skin, during the crisis, greatly influenced my practice through layering and palimpsest experimentations, collages, multiple printing, and adoption of new technologies. 2) How my practice was connected to the urban skin phenomenon to such an extent that I finally sought more intensive research at a doctoral level. The principal component for a deeper awareness was the concept of the trace, which acted as the generative force for both practice and theory. Indeed, it was the trace of the crisis I had been documenting for years, either in a single form (e.g., a slogan) or in a greater urban scenery. Equally, it was the trace that was developing and proliferating in my interdisciplinary art practice—in prints, collages, installations, and so on. When deciding to embark on a theoretical venture concerning scholarly sources, it was the trace of the crisis that was interpreted or subject to being read and understood by a plethora of disciplines. Furthermore, questions such as identity and continuity, culture and heritage, politics, and sovereignty were also involved with and embraced the notion of the trace. Given the research’s emergent nature and the dialogical relationship between the practice and the written thesis that

supports it, I will proceed to furnish a brief written conceptual reflection through and within the theoretical frames.

The first foray into theory concerns how this research is founded on a multidisciplinary approach engaged in disciplines that emphasise the Athenian urban reality during the crisis. Below, I bring together essential bibliographic references that map this reality. They also produce a lexicon that illustrates the general condition of the public space of Athens over the reference period, designating the ‘features’ of the skin. Nonetheless, a derma phenomenon is merely implied and not addressed directly, even though its proliferation is noticeable. By joining together multiple academic fields, I first intend to demonstrate that the visual appropriation of the city’s surface has attracted academic interest. Second, how my own contribution may respond, fill potential gaps, and be in dialogue with existing bibliographies. Public interventions through writing and painting were always noticeable to a certain degree on the Athenian walls. However, the ‘Greek crisis’ resulted in overpainting in some regions and on many central walls of Athens (Karathanasis, 2014, p. 177). After December 2008, the visual appropriation of urban space proliferated. The content of the slogans altered and shifted from humoristic and ironic to voices of agony and anger (Kalofolias, 2013, p. 5). Even during the early stages of the crisis, the visual appropriation ‘boomed’, converting the Athenian fixed cityscape into an open forum for dialogue and negotiation (Tsilimpounidi and Walsh, 2011, p. 111). ‘Graffiti and street art are ubiquitous, and they enjoy a very special place in the collective imaginary’ (Avramidis and Tsilimpounidi, 2017). Over the years, the phenomenon of painting and writing on public walls and other surfaces appears to have increased as more individuals got engaged (Karathanasis, 2014, p. 177). Their traces acted as uninvited intruders into your visual field, either demanding or lusting for your attention; they are thoughts that beseech space to be communicated, acts to be written; ‘they are the omens of the city, appearing during every turbulent historical era’ (Kalofolias, 2013, p. 5). They are alternative ways to express a ‘political imaginary of resistance’ (Karathanasis, 2014, p. 178), as ‘they fill your field of vision with texts and images that no one can escape’ (Avramidis and Tsilimpounidi, 2017).

The above statements are merely some of those derived from scholarly research intended to detect, read, and make known the condition of Athens’ cityscape during the crisis. They lay the foundation for understanding the need for space, collectivity, and the formation of collective imagery. Thomatos (2013) underpins this urgency of appropriating the social space, stating that ‘as long as the background remains dull and insufferable and the city is a hostile habitat that secures non-equivalencies, the walls will become the recipients of a

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generalized discontent' (p. 10). To go one step further from the above-mentioned statements and further argue on this 'generalised discontent' expressed via the public surfaces, I will proceed to stress the phenomenal appropriation of any available surface. Although the below summary of statements and discussion will not clearly speak of a skin of the crisis, it may provide evidence of its existence and the interest of the scholars in its extension. Hence, I will outline where these traces of struggle have taken place. 'They take place on surfaces...' (Avramidis and Tsilimpounidi, 2017); 'on walls', the most frequent space where graffiti is expected to be seen, but also 'on public monuments, buildings, and storefronts' (Chiotis, 2015, p. 154). Any available surface becomes a host of slogans and a bearer of messages; benches, building entrances, and pavements are often converted into communication mediums (Peponis, 2008, p. 9). The gradual deepening of the crisis throughout the years and its consequences such as 'disinvestment, austerity, and years of political struggle' relentlessly made available new surfaces and spaces: 'boarded-up urban ruins, unfinished buildings, vacant shop windows, and decaying billboards with nothing left to advertise' (Tulke, 2017, p. 202). Along these lines, 'the financial and socio-political instability inadvertently helped foster' a kind of 'renewal' (Kourelou, Liz and Vidal, 2014, p. 13) of the ruins that the generalised abandonment and dereliction produced. Giannakopoulos and Giannitsiotis (2010) refer to these spaces as 'geographical areas within a city (buildings, roads, neighbourhoods, monuments, parks, etc.)', addressing the 'contested space' where the relation between power and resistance is spatially shaped and simultaneously recomposing the space in turn (p. 12). This may remind us of an anthropological and archaeological angle on phenomenological approaches to landscape: the experience of human subjects within a landscape is an 'embodiment', the space exists as a sensing body, and the medium that shapes people's immersive experience is shaped by them in turn (Tilley, 2008, p. 271). Concerning a skin formation, it is of pivotal importance to stress that Giannakopoulos and Giannitsiotis (2010) argue that 'even the city as a whole' can be the site for the 'manifestation of social and cultural conflicts' that attempt to regulate, control, and appropriate it (p. 12). Thomatos (2013) points to 'the lack of free spaces' as the major factor in an 'accumulation of rage'. A vague sense of enclosure is produced in Athens. (p. 10). This factor may justify how the citizens feel under crisis circumstances and how urban appropriation 'claims more space, both for movement and for sharing thoughts' (Thomatos, 2013, p. 11). Hillman ([1989] 2008) introduces the notion of the 'psyche' of the city, arguing that its 'well-being' is not relevant to economic or social factors; instead, it is an 'esoteric phenomenon' (p. 106). According to him, the citizen becomes an 'angry child' who strikes' the city that has depersonalised it' with a depersonalised wrath and violence against the 'very objects' (p.

106). For the writer, the ‘very objects’ are storefronts, park monuments, and public buildings—which stand for uniform soullessness’ (p. 106). In the case of Athens, the ‘angry child’ could be seen in how the group *Pissa!* perceives the city as in crisis. *Pissa!* [tar] (2012) describes themselves as a collectivity in support of those who already ‘write’ the city walls and make known ‘what’s going on to those outside the scene’. They aim to foster ‘communities’ engaged in ‘graff’ that ‘produce life in contrast to the dominant misery’. *Pissa!* regards the city as ‘a collage’, a ‘multi-coloured one’ that is encroaching on the city, posing a ‘threat’ to which, both the government and ordinary citizens are powerless to handle. They also respond to any cleaning strategy by stating that every attempt to ‘clean the place up’ has vanished into thin air. For them, ‘home’ means that ‘everything is overpainted’, calling it ‘heaven’. Thus, from their perspective, we see the actors’ viewpoints and the experienced crisis by ‘people who live, spend time, socialise and, like themselves, have been socio-politically active in changing the everyday imagery of the Athenian public space’ (Karathanasis, 2014, p. 179).

When engaging in activities like political urban art or even just having an opinion [even different] over their occurrence, it makes room for reconsidering how these interventions ‘produce space for public use’ and a new insight into the ‘culture of public use’ (Stavrides, 2010, p. 9). According to Thomatos (2013), the act of writing on a wall attempts to persuade us that the way public spaces are constructed nowadays is endangering free expression. It demonstrates that shouting ‘present’ via this act may denote that one is marginalised within the city’s essential activities. The majority of the ‘writers’ would wish their deeds to go beyond these mere inscriptions in the public fabric, to be the signal of the beginning of a drastic change (p. 10). It is also essential to see how the emergent necessity for space embeds a collective sense into the cityscape. Although Avramidis (2012) refers to ‘urban artists’, the contested space, and their demand to be heard through the social space are clearly illustrated. According to him, the walls of Athens have long been ‘under a contested state’ and the actors “win” this urban “contest” by opening up spaces that permit their voices to be heard’ (p 15). All the above clues indicate that the gradual but ceaseless ‘opening up’ of spaces not only required the appropriation of the city’s surfaces but also produced a new bodily entity. They formed a skin that, like an intelligent being, incorporates all these voices, echoes, and hopes into its material (‘carnal’) body. This may bring to mind Brassai’s (2002) awareness of the role of the walls as the medium of union: ‘*It is the wall that gives/ to all these graffiti/ their stylistic unity/ their family resemblance/ as if they had been done by the same hand*’ (p. 151). The idea of the skin, with which I am engaged with in this doctoral project, transcends its

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basal medium (urban surfaces) and unfolds its qualities, information, and narratives of the crisis.

Relying on bibliographic sources from the initially mentioned research fields, I will touch on the nature of this skin, which points to its role. Below, apart from juxtaposing the socio-political indications and briefly mapping the conditions during the crisis, it is essential to pay attention to connotations that imply the existence of a skin. Zaimakis (2015a) refers to a palimpsest, where the cultural urban imagery is infused with politicised forms of protest, namely counteractions to the sovereign discourses, by the urban interventions [public writing and graffiti] (p. 119). He also addresses how the traumatic experience of the crisis is turned into a cultural potential through these activities. The need to communicate is so pressing and intense, that just writing a slogan on the wall functions as a relief (Thomatos, 2013, p. 10). The concept of palimpsest will be embraced below (and throughout the thesis) in detail. It will furnish an insight into the successivity of layers linked to history, continuity, and identity and further association with the current layer, that of the crisis. From a sociological point of view, Andrzej Zieleniec (2016) stresses the significance of both the urban space and the street as the fields for ‘resistance to oppression and the challenge to hegemonic social and political orthodoxy finding its power and strength by claiming, colonizing, or taking back the streets’. The visualisation of ‘non-hegemonic voices’ and even a single mark in the social fabric of Athens allude to greater socio-political tensions during the time of austerity and crisis (Tsilimpounidi, 2015, p. 19). A visual sign in Athens is the bearer of complex discourses of marginality, power dynamics, and countercultures that produce a new reality that needs to be seen and heard (Tsilimpounidi and Walsh, 2011, p. 111). A visualised expression on the walls of the city is simultaneously a ‘signifier, symbol, and symptom of conflict, contestation, and protest (Zieleniec, 2016); thus, the urban tracing in Athens acts as ‘a declaration of resistance and disobedience’ (Chiotis, 2015, pp. 153–154). Tsilimpounidou (2015) emphasises the social conditions of the crisis as the reason for converting the Athenian city centre into a field of relentless transformation that ‘screams a thousand stories’ (p. 18). Chiotis (2015) also highlights the phenomenon of a materially fleeting landscape under constant metamorphosis, where ‘alternative spatialities’ are articulated in an always fixed space (p. 154). These references imply the existence of a material fleeting derma unfolding on the fixed shapes of the city, whereas these structures (cement buildings, pillars, benches, kiosks, post-boxes, etc.) remain stable. This ‘collaged skin’, which covers the city, accommodates and embraces any voice that seeks to be visualised, always updates the cityscape with political information and its temporal aesthetics. Through this doctoral

project, in practice and theory, this skinned reality will be examined and preserved as a witness and evidence of collective memory and the history of the crisis in a visualised form inscribed on the very surfaces of the city.

The second foray into theory will set out to put these traces within a wider historical frame. Here, from the fields of archaeology, history, and ethnography, questions such as identity and continuity, artefacts and ruins of the past emerge as essential components to denote and be associated with national evidence. I will first embark on a bibliography addressing the current trace as an important indicator towards the concept of an alternative (or a parallel) source for historic accounts, through the urban surfaces of Athens during the crisis. Then, I will move towards scholarly accounts referring to selectivity concerning former historic layers and ruins of the past that were deliberately preserved in favour of the formation of national imagination. This decision raises the emergent issue of the significance of the current trace being linked to a wider range of historic layers and finally being retained for reassessment for future purposes. This discussion will raise questions that will be challenged further and interrogated in the final chapter (Chapter 7). In that chapter, any brought-up issue of selective and deliberate preservation of the past, aiming at the national imagination, will be examined through the current political context, the ‘clean city’. To be more specific, the municipality of Athens directed cleaning strategies to remove the traces of the crisis and erase a current layer of the city’s historic evolution. I will conclude by demonstrating that this strategy intensified the ‘contested space’ and was finally negated by the dynamic of the skin itself.

At this stage, I seek to engage with testimonies that acknowledge the trace of the crisis for its historical significance. Bibliographic accounts that admit that the crisis’ layer—within the broader historic palimpsest of what Athens is—has the generative force to act as a parallel history should be noticed. Kalofolias (2013) wonders where urban writings go when they are erased. If all the successive layers of public interventions could coexist in a place, a parallel making of history would have unfolded before us (p. 5). ‘Alternative histories and possibilities’ inscribed into ‘the very surface of the city’ can actively change the cityscape and reinvent daily life (Tulke, 2017, pp. 203-204). Indeed, if what was written on the walls during the crisis was preserved and discovered years later, it would be the citizens’ testimonials of rage inscribed in the very body of the city (Trichon-Milsani, 2013, p. 7). Peponis (2008), after decades of wandering and recording the slogans and graffiti on the Athenian walls, admits their dynamic as historic evidence. He argues that the written inscriptions are a product of the times; they reflect the events, circumstances, and conditions

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of their era. They portray a different side of history, one that is written by anonymous everyday people (p. 11). Spyropoulos (2013) stresses that ‘if years later, one found what is [now] written on the walls’, they would acknowledge them as testimonials that could not possibly appear in a magazine or a newspaper. The screens they are projected on are the urban walls, and through this medium, the heartbeat of a boiling city is witnessed (p. 7). Chiotis (2015) also argues for a notion of identity, namely how people are in pursuit of their current identity through urban appropriation; he refers to ‘signs of a community struggling to articulate itself’, despite the political impasse (p. 153). According to Lefebvre ([1970] 2003, p. 19), ‘the urban space of the street is a place for talk’, and this common space is not only focused on exchanging things but also on exchanging ‘words and signs’. As Lefebvre states, in this shared space ‘speech becomes writing’, and this ‘speech can become “savage”, by escaping rules and institutions and inscribe itself on walls’ (p. 19). This ‘savage’ speech, in the aftermath of instability and precariousness, signals how people stuck together in the riots and protests and unconsciously formed an identity of the communal. Lefebvre’s ([1970] 2003) earlier reference to urban speech, able to ‘escape rules and institutions, inscribe itself on walls’, describes how an active mind goes beyond a constructed (manipulated) sense of community, namely a nation, and produces their imagery on their own era’s traces. Mona Domosh (1992), commenting on Lowenthal’s (1961) essay *Geography, Experience and Imagination: Towards a Geographical Epistemology*, refers to this ‘active mind’ as the ‘creator of images’ in urban space (p. 476). She mentions that these images transcend their nature as ‘reflections of reality’ and instead ‘are the result of an active imagination’ (p. 476).

The extension of this imagery and its insistence in time actuated me to further attempt to examine this long-lasting reality as an essential layer of Athens’ unfolding throughout history. Besides, the direct visual engagement of people with the Athenian cityscape rendered the city ‘one of the most “stained” and “saturated” [...] in the world’ (Pangalos, 2014, p. 154). It is impossible to evaluate this proliferation as something that occurred in a single instance or within a short period, given that it was a protracted process that took years to spread out (Pangalos, 2014, p. 161). The skin’s deployment as a ‘contagious’ dominant form as well as its duration demonstrate that it is a pivotal layer of the city’s contemporary period; the skin is a reality; it exists. Pangalos (2014) emphasises the phenomenon as a ‘graffiti epidemic in Athens’, a complicated issue connected to recent events and the period preceding the crisis (p. 161). Evidently, he connects the crisis reality with the former layer, referring to the successivity of historic eras, and also implies that the official authorities let the skin spread out. Relying on this argument, the discussion will proceed to how the

deliberate selectivity of layers at the expense of others marked a defining moment in the case of Athens' cityscape; indeed, this happened multiple times during the last two centuries. In the current era, the elimination of the crisis trace was decided for political promotion. In other words, how the most recent municipalities have attempted to handle the skin's uncontrollable proliferation via cleaning strategies.

Luna Khirfan (2010) introduces a palimpsest analogy and stresses that the 'physical traces and marks left by earlier eras' act as 'memorial traces, those that are preserved in the collective memory' (p. 315). This idea points to two issues concerning the material culture's perspective in my project. On the one hand, it implies matters of spatiality: in current Athens, remnants of ancient and former layers co-exist with the crisis ruins. Khirfan (2010) discusses the importance of examining the current urban landscape as the frame within which the spatial articulation of heritage takes place. This significance is materialised through 'tangible and intangible heritage' and 'transforms the emerging urban form into a contemporary cosmic one' (p. 315). On the other hand, the past attaches importance to the current identity as a fruit of collective memory. Mike Crang (1996) remarks that 'as each era is overtaken by the next, it leaves traces and redundancies, obsolescence and irrationalities—things that remain as a mark: the burden of the past or an inheritance' (p. 430). The notion of the 'burden of the past' and the reference to 'inheritance' will be addressed below in an attempt to connect the current layer (crisis) with the past and its significance in the course of the formation of Greece's national imagination. According to Nordquist (2009), the 'national rhetoric' is relentlessly under construction, and the ancient monuments as well as museum displays of antiquity are considerably significant for this purpose. Nordquist (2019) discusses Hamilakis' (2007) book *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*, arguing that 'material culture as a national project is not static but constantly produced and reproduced in an ongoing negotiation between different agents, groups, and interests'. Nordquist (2009) also points to Hamilakis' (2007) dialectic about 'how classical antiquities and archaeology became significant when the ideology of the Greek national state was shaped in the 19th century'. Hamilakis (2007) advocates that the worship of icons and the staging of rituals and rites replicate national memories and foster a national imagination that is 'iconographic in nature and topographic in character'; these are aspects that nationalism has in common with religion (p. 16). The ancient ruins serve as landmarks and evidence of historical continuity, transforming a location into the *topos* of a nation (Chilidis, 2007, p. 233). To this end, the contribution of Greek archaeologists was significant, and Hamilakis (2007) divides their engagement into two

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roles: they acted as ‘religious specialists’ (p. 39) ‘who manage and purify the sacred remains of the nation’ (Chilidis, 2007, p. 233), making them visible (Nordquist, 2009), and as ‘soldiers’ (p. 40) ‘who defend the nation’s truths and produce its territorial landmarks’ (Chilidis, 2007, p. 233). The material remnants of the past played a significant role in the process of nation-building, evolving from far-off wonders endowed with magical qualities into revered ancestor relics that served to create and perpetuate the Hellenic national imagination (Chilidis, 2007, p. 234). Hamilakis (2007) accurately highlights the sacral characteristics attributed to antiquity (i.e., how its artefacts and past remnants became inherited from ancestors) and their role as ‘landmarks’. He stresses that even if their role is crucial, the material landmarks serve more than only as symbols of the national aspiration; they serve ‘not only as the essential (in both senses of the word), physical, natural, and real, and thus beyond any dispute, proof of the continuity of the nation, a key device for its naturalisation’ (p. 17). As Hamilakis (2007) states, in the course of developing the Greek national identity, western academies produced ‘Western Hellenism’ in archaeology and antiquity. This notion was adapted to indigenous Hellenism to create a direct ancestral line from antiquity to modernity (p. 119). This served as the foundation for the formation of a native Greek national imagination (p. 74). Linking antiquity to the newborn Greek state and its inhabitants was founded on the fact that ‘they spoke the same tongue and inhabited the same land’, thus they were considered ‘the direct heirs and agents’ (Petrakos, 1987, p. 17).

In summary, Hamilakis (2007) signals how significant the ‘reworking and re-appropriation’ of the ancient heritage was for the new Greek state (p. 74), envisioning the emancipation of the national narrative (p. 119). Almost 170 years later, celebrating the new millennium, Hamilakis (2007) highlights that the Olympic Games ‘Athens 2004’ was the milestone that most recently sparked a discourse on the place of antiquity in the contemporary national imagination (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 130). Even at the opening ceremony of the Olympics (August 13, 2004), a ‘precession of simulacra’ served to certify the Hellenic identity altogether ‘through a rehearsal of Greek history based on tangible archaeological evidence’ (Plantzos, 2008, p. 11). This obsession with the past may also imply that the current layer of the crisis, its ruins and traces, and, in general, its imagery are at risk of elimination. Let us take into consideration McNeal’s (1991) acknowledgement of Athens as a singular example of a capital where the emphasis is skewed towards treasures from antiquity at the expense of other historical eras (p. 49). McNeal (1991) introduces four ruins of the past into the discussion, preserved and situated in the Athenian landscape, as examples of the ‘best age of Greek art and architecture’; these are the Parthenon itself, the Erechtheion, the temple of

Athena Nike, and the Propylaea (p. 49). He refers to an archaeological selectivity in favour of these four antiquity treasures, stressing that archaeologists, to preserve solely the 5th century BC, obliterated the sites of the medieval and early modern past (p. 50). He accounts for that decision because that period of history seems to be prestigious, and the Periclean buildings stand-alone, torn from the context in which time and chance brought them to the modern world (p. 50). He carries on arguing that ‘the continuity, that is, of past and present has been broken; the later constructions have been cleared away so that the four ancient buildings can have pride of place’ (p. 50). These references to deliberate manipulation and finally alteration of the landscape, make one consider that the ephemeral traces of a crisis are condemned to vanish. McNeal’s (1991) reference to a broken continuity due to the rupture between past and present (p. 50) seems to intensify the interest in paying more attention to the skin of the crisis. For this purpose, I devoted a whole chapter (Chapter 7) to the strategic actions of the current municipality of Athens to alter the Athenian landscape and take advantage of the overpainted, overwritten, collaged city for political promotion.

In the end, is the skin of crisis a valuable historic layer to be preserved, providing an insight into our time, and not to vanish? Luna Khirfan (2010) addresses the city as a palimpsest, where every age leaves its imprints as if the metropolis were an empty canvas. A new urban layer and its fragments are overlaid over the previous one when the new age succeeds the former one (p. 315). Hence, what is the importance of preserving equally all the layers of a wider historic palimpsest? Freeman (1879), in his *Historical Essays*, furnishes us with an indicative answer on the matter of palimpsest and the ‘unbroken continuity of history’ (p. v) concerning the development of European history throughout the centuries. He advocates that the lessons of one period may be more appealing or more instructive than those of another within the larger frame of oecumenical history. Yet he insists that ‘no age is without its lesson. All are alike parts of the great whole; of none are the material witnesses to be recklessly swept away’ (p. 285). In the case of Athens during the crisis era, this material culture entwined traces and surfaces; the proliferation of the traces was firmly linked to the accumulation of ruined places. At the early stages of the introduction, I referred to Tulke’s (2017) comment on ‘the ruptures’ that arose in the cityscape due to ‘disinvestment, austerity, and years of political struggle’ (p. 202). All these consequences of the crisis relentlessly produced new spaces and available surfaces; for instance, the impact of the crisis on commerce resulted in urban carcasses, shabby billboards, and a generalised emergent dereliction (Tulke, 2017, p. 202). According to Kindynis (2019), these are the ‘in-between spaces’ functioning ‘as time capsules: a kind of accidental, historic cache of material culture’

(p. 27). As Jeff Ferrell (2004, p. 258) advocates, they are ‘lost ecologies’, namely spatially and temporally interstitial urban ‘ruins’ (2015). They can be considered ‘architectural *glitches*’ that exist in-between, even though a city can be constantly ‘retrofitted, renovated, and reconfigured’ (Kindynis, 2019, 27). These in-between spaces with their content (traces) intertwined can be examined through an ethnographic excavation of the material traces’ (Kindynis 2019: 27) as they are perceived and reflected on the surfaces of the cityscape. This perspective addresses the framework of ‘ghost ethnography’, a newly developed methodological direction that emphasises ‘absence and the interpretation of material and atmospheric traces’ (Kindynis, 2019, p. 25).

11. Structure of thesis

Chapter 1 outlines the general angles of the project and provides an overview of each of the queries that will be unfolded throughout the thesis. From the outset of the chapter, 1.1, ‘the idea of the derma’ is foregrounded, focusing on identifying the extension of the city’s visual appropriation since the early days of the crisis. Concepts such as ‘the ephemeral urban palimpsest’ as well as ‘a collage and its fragments’ (1.2) come directly after. A discussion of the existing bibliography aims at stressing the phenomenon based on references dealing with graffiti as an ‘epidemic’, a palimpsest that is always politicised and encompasses forms of protest and trauma. At this point, a lack of literature is initially pointed out, referring to ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’ as generalised terms to delineate the phenomenon. In 1.3, I move towards defining the general framework of my ‘research methodology’ and how the practice will determine my research’s material. Here, the key elements of the research methodology are introduced, especially how the practice leads a multivalent art-based project, acting as a generative for intersections with the existing bibliography and contributions to it through the practice. In 1.4, the ‘Mapping and de-mapping the crisis’ section also contributes to the differentiation of my research practice and methodology apropos the existing attempts of mapping the crisis. The new mapping refers to how the counter-maps de-contextualise the ordinary map and re-imagine the reality of the crisis with the embodied practice outcomes on them. The chapter ends (1.5) by dealing with how the body of produced virtual objects and images functioning as the ruins of crisis are placed alongside the ancient ruins that co-exist within a temporary palimpsest that maps contemporary Athens. At this point, connotations referring to identity, continuity and

ethnography emerge, relating the preservation of the current historic layer with the former successive layers as archaeological evidence for future investigation.

Chapter 2 introduces the chief points of the most frequent terminologies appearing in the thesis in a suggested ‘lexicon’. This discussion aims at coordinating relevant information for further understanding the problematics and questions raised throughout the research project. In 2.1, I examine Athens through its surfaces, drawing on anthropological and archaeological perspectives on landscape and a sociological view of ‘contested space’. Especially, I refer to Tilley’s (2008) statement of the ‘sensing and sensed carnal body’ of the city (p. 271) as well as to the book *Contested Spaces in the City - Spatial approaches to Culture* (Giannakopoulos and Giannitsiotis, 2010) to provide insight into how the motif of power and resistance obtains a spatial dimension. The detection of the skin and its research through practice are seen as contributing to concepts from a social and cultural anthropology perspective, and the idea of the city as a multivalent insight or urban actuality is reinforced. In 2.2, I explore Athens’ urban imagery as a ‘collage’ and how the city visually narrates various utopias, dreams, and a need for change on its skin. In 2.3, I consider how the skin of the city is made up of more than just graffiti and street art and how alternative tourism in Athens is driven by their popularity. 2.4 provides a discussion on how the skin of the city is the message conveyed by the city itself and how it carries political and cultural messages that reflect the past and present of a city. Then, in 2.5, I examine the ‘palimpsest’ concept and its relevance to the surfaces of Athens. It describes how Google Maps is used to examine the digital version of the Athenian palimpsest and how my printmaking has been influenced by the palimpsest process. In 2.6, I proceed to explore the issue of graffiti in Athens and the efforts of the official authorities to remove it to create a ‘clean city’ image. The last section (2.7) describes the fieldwork research that took place in Athens from December 2018 to December 2019, which focused on exploring the city’s evolving visual appropriation and socio-political frictions due to the economic crisis.

Chapter 3 discusses the relationship between the Athenian cityscape and its past and potential future, particularly how socio-political conditions have affected public engagement with urban space. The chapter examines the concept of landscape concerning various fields such as cultural geography, archaeology, cultural heritage management, interpretative archaeology, cultural anthropology, architecture, history, philosophy, etc., highlighting the ephemeral nature of landscapes and the need to preserve and document them. The post-empiricist stances of J.B. Jackson are discussed, which view landscapes as capable of providing for social change by advocating norms, values, and fears (Schein, 2003, p. 2003).

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Finally, I argue that investigating the Athenian current urban sphere would contribute to charting the succession and continuity of the city by ‘reading’ its landscape. In 3.2, I examine the contrast between areas of wealth and poverty in Athens and the role of street art as a means of expressing social and political consciousness. I argue that street art and graffiti are localized cultural artefacts with their codes and history and that documenting them can redirect official accounts of history through mass media or other means of communication. In 3.3, I explain how the urban landscape of Athens has changed over time, highlighting the influence of Ottoman rule, European influence, World War II, and the Greek civil war, and the 2004 Olympics. Then, the focus is placed on the appearance of urban fragments, specifically street art and graffiti, and how they reflect changing circumstances and political struggles in Athens. I argue that street art should be understood in the context of the urban landscape as a whole and not just as isolated pieces, namely as a skin analogy. Additionally, I note that street art in Athens is primarily created by university-educated, middle-class young adults who express a desire for social change.

Chapter 4 discusses the adopted tools of practice methodology, such as photography, 3D scanning, and photogrammetry, for documenting and building up the skin narrative. In 4.1, I discuss the importance of photography in documenting the ephemeral and transitional stages of urban development in Athens. In 4.2, I refer to the December 2008 shooting of a 15-year-old schoolboy, Alexis Grigoropoulos, which triggered massive protests throughout Greece and resulted in the Exarchia district becoming a hotspot for political graffiti and street art. In 4.1.2., I recount my experience of participating in the 2008 demonstrations in Athens and taking pictures of the slogans written on the walls using a digital camera. I describe how inscriptions on urban walls, such as stencils of the murdered boy's face, anti-racist and anti-government portrayals, and slogans commemorating his death, formed a living archive of the current historical conjuncture. In 4.1.3, I discuss the effects of the Greek economic crisis on the urban landscape of Athens and how graffiti and other markings on public surfaces can be viewed as historic evidence of that period. In 4.1.4, I examine the challenges of evaluating the cultural significance of historic graffiti and the importance of preserving ephemeral traces of events to preserve historical memory. In section 4.2, I introduce the adoption of 3D scanning and photogrammetry in my research to build up a virtual skin. In 4.2.1, I refer to the limitations of photographs in capturing the transient and ephemeral nature of landscapes. Instead, I advocate for the use of 3D methods such as 3D scanning and virtual modelling. In 4.2.2, I argue that these methods provide a more detailed and immersive experience of reality compared to a single photograph and are

necessary for capturing the ‘skin’ of cities like Athens. In 4.2.3, I discuss the use of digital technology, such as mobile phone cameras and Agisoft Metashape software, for documenting and tracking the evolution of urban spaces. In 4.2.4, I emphasise the importance of examining all traces, not just traditional forms of street art like graffiti, and provide examples of using 3D modelling to represent wider urban imageries and their skins, such as metal boxes and shopfronts. In 4.2.5 and 4.2.6., I provide stages of producing virtual skins, argue for the potential of the resulting models to mimic reality, and offer evidence of memory. This is of essential importance for my research given that this imagery will remain as evidence of the past even if the current reality goes extinct. In 4.3, I discuss the conducted fieldwork ‘Viva la Revolucion’; a case study that examines an Athenian wall covered in various visual appropriations. I refer to Hillman's (1989, p. 105) idea of the soul of a city to argue that neglecting the well-being of citizens leads to a disgruntled populace that lashes out through art and other means. I also question the aesthetics and purpose of graffiti, comparing it to both informal art and ancient runes, and suggest that preserving such imagery may provide insight into the psyche of a city. In 4.4, I discuss the case and the photographic work of Jonathan Miller, who collected and photographed overlooked and neglected objects and details for almost three decades. Unlike Miller, I juxtapose how, in my case, I explore the use of digital technology to create 3D models of the collected details. In 4.5, I compare my approach to that of Brassai, who photographed ‘disreputable’ areas of Paris. The discussion also addresses how Brassai's work introduces an essential component relevant to my research by isolating fragments of reality in close-up shots. In 4.6, I refer to Peponis's work, which captured Athenian imageries through slogans and surrounding areas for decades before the crisis, and how it shifted towards political aphorisms as signs of the crisis were already present. In 4.7, I compare my own work to Spyropoulos's graffiti collection from the Exarhia area, highlighting my focus on the broader impact of the crisis on the urban environment. Section 4.8 illustrates fieldwork conducted in December 2019 to assess the impact of the economic crisis in the Dafni area of Athens, which is located far from the city centre. The fieldwork, which took place over two days and covered both commercial and non-commercial streets between two metro stations, aimed to provide evidence of the extent of the crisis's impact on the urban imagery of the area. In 4.8.1 and 4.8.2, I describe the project, which was conducted in two phases and aimed to determine the impact of the economic crisis on an area far from the city centre. I also introduce the concept of appropriating Google Maps to create a visual representation of the information gathered, including images produced via the 3D scanning processes. During the fieldwork, I also counted the number of open and closed shops on Vouliagmenis Ave. and found that almost

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half of the shops were closed, indicating a significant impact of the recession on the area. Furthermore, maps and images from photogrammetries are included to illustrate the extent of the skin phenomenon in the area. In 4.8.3, I conclude the two phases of fieldwork carried out to understand the extent of the economic crisis's impact on the Dafni area beyond the city centre. I refer to my discovery that the skin of the crisis, which refers to urban inscriptions, can be found on any available surface.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the research methodology, which aims to explore new ways of mapping the visual evolution of Athens during the economic crisis. In 5.1., I refer to how I use data, accumulated from periodic recordings in Athens for charting courses in imagery maps. In other words, I create virtual maps that de-map the original map of Athens and highlight seemingly insignificant areas affected by the crisis. These 'de-maps' can be visited virtually or potentially in physical space, rendering the preserved spots 'sightseeing' of the crisis alongside ancient ruins of Greek civilization. In 5.2, I associate my maps with questions such as the Greek identity, and thus I discuss the connection of Greece's identity and history with ruins. Here I examine how the effort to revive a glorious past, relying on the iconography of ancient ruins, was supplanted by the recession and its imagery, which includes contemporary ruins. I also refer to how the adoption of a theory of 'indigenousness' coincided with a discourse in the field of archaeology, and how antiquities as national treasures are firmly linked to Greece's national imagination. I also attempt to examine the connection between the Olympic Games, history, culture, and contemporary Greece, with particular attention paid to the 2004 Athens Olympics. Finally, I deal with the opening ceremony of the 28th Olympic Games, which took place in Athens in 2004, and how the ceremony celebrated Greece's continuity through a certain antique bias, a celebration of the all-time-classic Greek ideal. 5.3 I refer to how Google Maps is used in research and practice. On the one hand, I emphasise the benefits of integrating Google Maps in research and practice, as it offers a user-friendly and accessible platform for visualising and interacting with geographic information, regardless of technical expertise. On the other hand, I discuss the limitations of using Google Maps to create accurate representations of the real world. I argue that map-making should be understood through the lens of relational contexts and examined through other methods, such as ethnography and participant observation. I also refer to other researchers, who are skeptical of Google Maps and highlight that it can be weaponized for surveillance and control. I also note that Google Maps cannot fully capture the constantly changing nature of a landscape in crisis, and thus, I introduce my own 'demaps' as an alternative to Google Maps. In 5.4, I discuss the potential of new

technologies, such as Google Maps, to distribute my research and make it more accessible to the wider public. Hence, I note that the use of digital platforms addresses a great potential to share maps through social media, for instance, given that the use of the mobile phone and social media has become an integral part of people's everyday lives. I also question whether a global society would still be interested in the physical walls and surfaces of a city as a medium of socio-political communication, given their familiarity with virtual images posted on virtual 'walls'. In 5.5, I approach how the decision to map and simultaneously distribute maps of the skin may outline a new lexicon that moves beyond terms such as 'graffiti' and aims to correspond to the extensiveness of the real urban phenomenon of the crisis. My digital engagement aims to merge the real walls with the virtual walls by distributing materials that cover the city's whole variety of surfaces. In 5.6, I refer to how practice engagement with these technologies aims to contribute to a new discourse between the artist and a broader public by using visuals and informative data.

In Chapter 6, I unfold my methodology for retrieving past city layers using GIS and Google Maps, acknowledging the limitations of a virtual exploration of the past. In 6.1, to fill this gap, I propose a virtual 'décollage' approach as a constructive alternative to the deconstructive nature of traditional décollage art. This approach involves documenting different stages of the city's development to digitally preserve each stage. I will also rely on case studies to demonstrate this approach and show how it can be used to uncover fragments of the past using new technologies. In 6.2, I compare the conditions in which the post-war décollage emerged in France with the current economic crisis in Athens. In Athens, the abandoned sites of advertisement due to the crisis provide a fresh space for anonymous lacerators to disseminate socio-political calls for protests and strikes rather than attacking the spectacle of the advertisement itself (as in post-war France). I conclude the section by referring in brief to the current mayor of Athens and private businesses' efforts to remove the traces of the crisis' skin, yet I will explore this issue in detail in the next chapter. With respect to a virtual décollage as a research tool, case studies will be used to illustrate my attempt to peel away and uncover the layers of the 'sedimentary' skin of the city's history. In 6.3, a case study of a closed store in Athens called 'B & K' is illustrated via visuals of temporal layers. The spot was initially photographed in January 2012, with multiple layers of posters covering both the door and the showcase. Through this example, I explore how this image functions as a 'map' of the specific moment of the capture and how the layers of the crisis' skin started to take their place over. I also discuss the de-mapping or décollaging process of the urban scene as a way of peeling away the past layers to view what lies

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underneath the virtual surface. Google Maps is used to retrieve past layers, but this process is also fragmentary, and only a few layers from the past can be provided. In the course of the case study's development, I present past stages of the 'B & K' store's metamorphosis with photographs and discuss how they can function as layers of reading the gradual evolution of the crisis throughout the years. I also highlight the evidential connection between the crisis and the cityscape as the ruins of consumerism gradually appear. In 6.4, I discuss the use of décollage, a compositional process that involves peeling away layers to reveal history, in understanding the development of Athens' cityscape and its progression towards the visual ruins of the economic crisis. The layers of posters on the city's surface reveal the evolution of consumerism leading up to the crisis as well as the subsequent resistance to financial difficulties through cultural events and demonstrations. In 6.5., I discuss the use of décollage as a means to uncover the layers of the previous capitalistic forms in Athens, particularly through the advertisements that promote consumerism. For this purpose, I provide visual examples of a location (a billboard) in Athens that gradually declined from a glossy and luxurious place to a derelict one. The Greek crisis is presented as a new reality that established itself without products and commodities; thus, the advertisement of expensive lifestyles in the public space was useless. In 6.6, I refer to Guy Debord's ([1967] 2014) argument that modern life as an 'accumulation of spectacles' (p. 2) has altered the experience of living into a representation, and the crisis could be seen as a new reality that outplaces the society of the spectacle. The section concludes by discussing the idea of the map and the territory and how the skin of traces that covers and takes the place of the concrete map forms the anti-spectacle. In 6.7, I introduce the concept of Athens as an 'urban collage' during the crisis, where various elements coexist on the surface of the city. Here, I argue that this collage reflects some of modern life's key issues and phenomena, such as excess and waste, and that it serves to express socio-political dissent and critique. The layers of the collage, which constantly change and redefine, could provide access to a history that was written in the moment it occurred. I suggest that the visualised information in this collage could be used to restore history from the layers of the city's surface. In 6.8, I explore the same concept, referencing Leo Malet's (1969) statement about the collage of the future. In the case of Athens, I note that the variety of mediums and surfaces involved in the production of this collage includes not only the walls but also pavements, post-boxes, building entrances, and columns; thus, any available surface. I question if there is an intentional collage maker in Athens and consider whether the crisis is the maker, sparking urban interventions. In 6.9, I move on to examine the role of the poster in Athens during the crisis. The poster is seen as a solid constructive material for building up the 'skin of the city' and a vehicle for socio-

political messages. Ultimately, the Athenian city poster is seen as a narrator of the socio-political and a building material of Athens' current imagery.

Chapter 7 deals with the concept of the 'clean city' and discusses the current efforts by the Athenian municipal authorities, led by the mayor Kostas Bakoyiannis, to remove or reduce the visual 'skin' of the city in favour of political promotion. From the very beginning, I have noted that this strategy has affected my research, which has already covered 11 years of recordings and documentation of the memory of the crisis. Here, my position is to warn of the danger of manipulating collective memory and history by removing the current visual layer of Athens' imagery, which would interrupt the historic palimpsest of successive historical stages, ruins, and layers. I argue that the true memory is the one that is immediately selected from the public surface and has taken refuge in gestures, habits, and skills passed down by unspoken traditions and in the very body of the city itself. In 7.1, I approach the past attempts of the former mayor of Athens, George Kaminis, to reduce the number of graffiti and urban interventions on the city's walls, which he called the 'smudges' of the city. Kaminis launched a campaign in 2016 to remove graffiti from important streets and landmarks, starting with the wall of the first cemetery of ancient Athens. Here, I note the political implications of public involvement in the campaign and question who the "active groups" were that were called upon to participate. I also highlight the density of visual interventions on the vertical surfaces of Athens and the city's unique status as a case of urban appropriation worldwide (Pangalos, 2014, p. 154). In 7.2, I discuss how Athens' current mayor, Kostas Bakogiannis, uses Instagram to promote his cleaning strategy for the city. He regularly posts pictures of civic activities related to cleaning on his profile, which has over 105,000 followers. I argue that the previous mayor was not successful in keeping the city clean. Bakogiannis's strategy aims to eradicate the 'imprint of misery' on public surfaces, and his efforts have attempted to connect the city's historical past with its current image to promote the vanishing of the imagery of the crisis. In 7.3, I deal with the involvement of Karcher Greece, a private cleaning company, in the municipal program 'Adopt your City', aimed at cleaning Athens. Karcher adopted Patission Str. and contributed their equipment and expertise to remove graffiti, slogans, and posters from the façades of stores in the area. The mayor's regular posts on his Instagram profile deal with cleaning activities, such as 'Cleanliness Sundays', which 'have become a part of every neighbourhood' in Athens (Bakoyiannis, 2020d). In 7.4, I proceed to a particular reference to Karcher Greece's involvement in the revitalisation of Patission Str. as they make known their strategy using high-pressure hot-cold water cleaning machines and graffiti protectors to clean the façades

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of stores on Patission Str. I reflect on how this cleaning process contributes to the layering of the city's skin and how the new blank surface may offer new available space for new expressions in the future. I include visuals that illustrate the 'before' and 'after' images of the cleaning process posted on Karcher Greece's Instagram profile. In 7.5, I proceed to a discussion of the language used by the mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyiannis, on his Instagram profile to support the city's clean strategy. I refer to 49 posts from August 2020 to April 2021, focusing on the mayor's statements on cleaning operations, particularly on vertical surfaces like walls and shopfronts, as well as the 'skin' of the city. I particularly detect the mayor's use of the term 'large surfaces' to verbally handle the extension of visual appropriation and how the mayor uses the word 'surface' to define his field of activity: the public sphere. Through this discussion, I aim to provide readers with an understanding of the official authorities' cleaning strategy and its rhetoric. In 7.6, through visuals and discussion, I deal with how people in Athens use urban 'objects' found in the cityscape to produce their own socio-political 'note board' that expresses public disappointment after protests. I also explore the socio-political context and power of the primary images used in the research and how collage can enforce new meanings on the initial material, often as an act of revolt. In 7.7, I emphasize the cleaning of anti-graffiti jardinières on the 'Grand Promenade' in Athens by the mayor, Kostas Bakoyannis, in response to vandalism. I particularly note that the chosen slogan for the Instagram video showcasing the cleaning was 'UPRISING', which has symbolic implications. The jardinières previously displayed a variety of slogans, including 'Justice will be decided on the street', before being whitewashed.

Chapter 1 A fleeting skin engulfs the city in crisis

Since the beginning of Greece's economic crisis in 2008, Athens has gradually become a centre of overmarking activity on its surfaces, testifying to the multi-layered reality of the socio-political developments subject to the recession. Some examples were the ripped posters that were never taken off, anti-establishment stencils and graffiti, dissatisfaction writing on public offices or on monument walls, and many other forms. Even in the early days of the crisis, this appropriation of the cityscape was unavoidably noticed. In 2011, Tsilimpounidi and Walsh referred to the visual urban form that 'had boomed over the last years, transforming the fixed landscape of a city [Athens] into a platform for negotiation and dialogue' (p. 111). These visualised voices appeared as 'a visual marker of the shifting, complex discourses of power struggles, marginality, and countercultures that establish a new reality that must be seen and heard' (2011, p. 111). Similar to how a crisis develops, urban writing's proliferation is a long process that has taken years to spread out and cannot be examined as something that happened in a specific moment or within some months (Pangalos, 2014, p. 161).

1.1 The idea of a Derma

Athens in crisis has provided a unique case of the public's engagement with the cityscape to the extent that one could discuss the existence of a distinctive city skin, a *derma*. This skin has been covering the architectural volumes with constantly updated political information, colour, texture, and various matters. Pangalos (2014) discusses a 'graffiti epidemic in Athens' and argues that the reasons why the coverage of the city is so widely spread are 'complex and can be related to current events and the general situation in the period before the crisis' (p. 161). Zaimakis (2015a) argues that 'public writing and graffiti have politicized the city's cultural palimpsest, codified forms of protest against dominant political narratives, and also turned the traumatic experience of the crisis into a source of inspiration and cultural creation' (p. 119). Although these two perspectives address and frame the phenomenon to some degree—'epidemic', 'palimpsest', 'forms of protest', etc.—terms such as 'graffiti' and 'public writing' are not sufficient to describe the phenomenal appropriation that has been taking place in Athens so far. These generalised terms may deal with partial components of the bigger picture, yet urban appropriation has been noticed to such an extent, regarding time (extension), spatiality (any available surface), and materiality (techniques, materials used),

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that it is necessary to address it from a new perspective. This lack of literature will be examined in my thesis by adopting the term ‘skin’ (derma) through various practice-based methodologies. In brief, the natural layering (layer upon layer) process of the city is approached and sparked my printmaking body of work. The periodical documentation of the always updated and transformed skin led me to new forms, ‘ruins of the crisis’, fragments, and glitches of the adopted technology (3D), contributing an additional layer to the Greek historical narrative based on past fragments from antiquity onwards. Besides, the idea of collage, both as a practice-based tool and context, plays a considerable role in my research, suggesting how art-based methodologies may contribute to our understanding of the particular case of Athens’s imagery of crisis.

The idea of a ‘collaged skin’ steps forth that makes room for any echo and accommodates and respects any voice that is visualised through politicised urban crafts and slogans of struggle. Through this research, I intend to review the case of Athens in crisis as an urban collage, where public echoes, the ‘voices of protest’ (Zaimakis, 2015a, p. 119), endeavour to find their place and inscribe collective memory and the history of the crisis in a visualised way on the surfaces of the cityscape.

The idea of a ‘collaged city’ or ‘Athens in crisis as an urban collage’ can initially be relied on what a collage is considered to be: a pasting process of diverse materials on a single surface, possibly divergent, normally with no association with one another (‘Collage’, 2012). Used within the framework of a cityscape, it can bring to light how each piece of writing, or, broadly, the visualised praxes co-exist and merge into a new unity, the skin. Yet, Monica Kjellman-Chapin (2006) argues that based on its definition, ‘a collage is identified as and unequivocally a work of art’, presuming the involvement of an artist (p. 90). In the case of Athens and its skin, are all the involved instigators artists? Do they need art skills to mark the city with a political slogan or just illegible tagging, pasting, or tearing a poster apart, destroying parts of the derma in the process? When the phenomenon of general public engagement has been so expanded in space and time, we assume that not only artists are involved. Hence, this research will also focus on non-artistic forms, showing how the skin allows room for any optical outcomes (and not only the written ones), accommodating even those that would never be described in terms of ‘urban art’ and ‘graffiti’, photographed, documented, or used in the literature.

Several studies and papers about Athens have adopted commonly used lexicons such as ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’ to refer to the phenomenon of consciously wishing to express views,

for example, dissatisfaction over a political event. These terms, however, imply embedded artistry. For example, Chiotis (2015) discusses compositional components of the skin, such as slogans, street art, and graffiti. However, he insists on ‘their artistry’, and how ‘artists and amateurs make use of it to create works’ (p. 153). Although he suggests that ‘the act of writing’ takes place ‘on walls’, which is the frequent place where graffiti is expected to be located, he also notices an imprinting process ‘on public monuments, buildings, and storefronts’ (2015, p. 154). On the contrary, in my research, my focus on the necessity of visualising the crisis’s impact—or, in general, the reactions to the recession—witnesses acts produced beyond an artist’s skill or made by craftsmen. Anonymity or an unwitting gesture, not necessarily a written one, are equally embraced in the idea of the skin. Yet, Chiotis’s above reference (2015, p. 154) to various engaged urban shapes indexes the sense of skin beyond the public walls.

Chiotis (2015) refers to Athens during the crisis and the role of ‘street art’ as not ‘only a declaration of resistance and disobedience, but also an attempt to create and demarcate alternative spatialities within any given city’s borders’ (pp. 153-154). Besides, ‘the groups and individuals implicated in street art and its many manifestations come together to trace their own geographies on an already-defined landscape’ (p. 153). The contestation of a fixed space that undergoes ceaseless change and is always delineated evidence of the idea of a fleeting derma, providing that the organised shapes of the city, such as the cement buildings and other volumes (pillars, benches, kiosks, etc.), remain stable. The derma is the phenomenon that successively alters the image we have of the city, hiding the official architectural structures.

Thus, the existing literature on ‘street art’ and ‘graffiti’ only identifies compositional elements of it. Instead, my research question on pre-existing, collaged derma attempts to detect, define, and understand this skin as a transformable material space where the ‘alternative spatialities’ (Chiotis, 2015, p. 154) take place on an ‘already-defined landscape’ (p. 153).

Certainly, the details may provide a ‘mapping’ of the qualities (the ‘character’) of this derma. All these forms [slogans and street art] function ‘as signs of a community struggling to articulate itself in the face of political stagnation; ontology, politics, and art thus become intimately entwined’ (Chiotis, 2015, p. 153). The urban tracing as ‘a declaration of resistance and disobedience’ (pp. 153-154) denotes that Athens as a collage is a release against austerity, and the public interventions are a political act. It is a way towards emancipation

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through subversive visual praxes. Indeed, subversion is the central quality of collage; the collected material is deprived of its principal context, and its embedding in new compositions is an act of subversion, a form of protest (Busch, Klanten, 2016, p. 2). Athens, in terms of collage, can be seen as an abstractive process in response to how it achieves to re-arrange its controversial visual components in a unique optical composition. Nonetheless, abstraction does not really exist; even abstract art has a content: it forms itself (Walker, 1977, p. 139). As far as the optical outcome is concerned, Athens in crisis has provided an example of a cityscape full of colour, writing, and traces.

The notion of subversion in my research emerges two inquiries. On the one hand, this subversive nature of the urban collage displays that the cityscape is always visually redeveloped and politically updated. In other words, it provides alternative or marginalised narratives and historic evidence of Athens's current evolution, inscribed on the very body of the city at the same time that it occurs. Through my research, I will provide both a formula (methodology) for preserving this imagery and the visual outcomes for future readings of the crisis or historic interpretations.

On the other hand, I will discuss the political dimension that emerged through subversion: the resistance of the tracing activity against any decisive cleaning strategy of the official state. In fact, since October 2019, the recent mayor of Athens has begun a determining policy to clean what was thought to be an 'imprint of misery' (Bakoyiannis, 2020a, 2020e) and 'pollution is not an art' (2020a). This period coincides with my research's development and, in particular, part of my fieldwork and *in situ* recordings. Throughout the following chapters, I will further examine this contestation between sovereignty and public urban engagement, with individuals who seek ways to be heard by appropriating the cityscape's surfaces.

1.2 The 'ephemeral' urban palimpsest, a collage and its fragments

My intention to handle my practice as a palimpsest of temporal recorded layers is associated with how Athens's imagery is seen as a collage. Pissa (2012a) argues that the Athenian palimpsest is a 'multi-coloured collage taking over the city', a phenomenal collage whose inconceivable dimensions can be 'a threat that the state as well as private individuals are no match for' (p. 3). Pissa (meaning 'tar') is a street art group in Athens, and they aim to demonstrate that street activity on public walls is not disconnected from the rest of the cityscape, society, and everyday life. The produced sum does not belong to a gallery or

museum, as it is alive, dynamic, and affiliated with the societal reality of now, whenever this present may be (Pissa, 2012b). Pissa (2012a) had indeed perceived the existence of the [collaged] skin, ‘...painted trains, walls, and window screens’, as well as the authorities’ difficulty in controlling it: ‘every effort made for “cleaning the place up” has become just a memory. Everything is overpainted—a heaven for writers—and we really feel like home’ (p.3).

Each fragment of this created sum is a living, dynamic organism that is transient and non-resistant to time’s effects. It may occupy a space that becomes larger or smaller, itself becoming larger or smaller. My fragmented outcomes from a photogrammetry procedure that will be displayed below demonstrate the same ability for transformation in context and shape as well. The urban fragment, instead of a timestamp of creation because of its organic development, exists as a breathing entity in a time range. The maker’s name does not matter, yet the intangibility of personal involvement is what affects the cityscape. Tsilimpounidi (2015) suggests that the intangibility has to do with the existing social conditions and that the city walls of central Athens are a terrain undertaking constant metamorphosis, one that ‘screams a thousand stories’ (p.18). This is again a reminder of the city as a ‘visual diary on public display’, a social fabric against a value system relying on money, consumerism, and capitalism: if you don’t belong to the consumer caste [the bourgeoisie], ‘you are just a consumable unit’ (Bleeps.gr, 2014, p. 221). Addressing this multivalent and polyphonic skin (collage), through my practice and methodology of image capturing and making, I engaged in understanding, reading, and being inspired by it. As a response, the utilisation of art-based methods and methodologies assists me in preserving it at first; then in image making, contributing an additional layer to its perception as part of Athens’s recent and current imagery. The city palimpsest and its observation acted as the trigger to produce my palimpsests, skins, and fragments, establishing this reality in the fine art realm beyond its ephemeral nature.

If we follow Khirfan’s (2010) example and view the city as a palimpsest, we can start to see an empty space that each era leaves its mark on. As the new era succeeds the previous one, a new urban layer and its fragments are superimposed over the previous one (p. 315). Karathanasis (2014) introduces the term ‘overpainted’ referring to the excessive visual cues covering the walls of Athens and what is then painted over or added over (p. 177). The visual cues and implicated messages are transient, and the layers are appropriated on a daily basis, as the individuals appropriate the city surfaces and produce their own layers. These are not resistant to other people’s touch, the weather, heat, pollution, or other random or unknown

elements. My contribution to preserving this activity certainly cannot include all the traces or the development of each spot in the city. At first sight, this effect might hint at the research's inability to cover the whole Athenian activity, relying on periodical and partial coverage. Nonetheless, through my periodical recordings, I would attempt to furnish evidence of how this problematic finally functions in favour of the practice and its produced body of work. On the one hand, the skin's impotence reveals the problematic nature of capturing the extensiveness and omnipresence of the skin-palimpsest. On the other hand, my fragmented potential to document the city produces an iconography of fragments responding to virtual objects-ruins, beyond the initially photographed subjects. It goes beyond a mere photographic still of the referent and contributes to new imagery of the ruins of the crisis. The same referents are always depicted in new shapes, producing a palimpsest of unique objects (glitches), functioning independently from the primary subject matter.

1.3 Research methodology: how practice has unfolded the submerged idea of the *derma*

Embarking on practice-based research as the foundation of this thesis, I gradually discovered that the idea of engaging with a 'skin', the derma of Athens in crisis, would be the focal point of this research. The skin discovery and further embrace of it were mostly unveiled through field-based recordings in Athens from December 2018 to December 2019 and any previously documented material since 2008 on. The outcomes were examined afterwards and involved in experimental practices, both in digital space and 2D (print), emerging an idea of layering and a palimpsest methodology relevant to skin function. A pivotal point was the development of the process in relation to the existing bibliography and the detection of a gap within it, as far as the idea of an Athenian skin is concerned. In fact, during the years of the crisis, there have been numerous scholars and researchers undertaking studies on the Athenian cityscape through disciplines such as: sociology of culture (Yiannis Zaimakis) and social anthropology (Myrto Tsilimpounidi, Pafsanias Karathanasis), architecture (Stavros Stavrides, Konstantinos Avramidis, Orestis Pangalos), Archaeology, Art history and history (Konstantina Drakopoulou), photography (Takis Spyropoulos), Cognitive Semiotics (Georgios Stampolidis), Comparative literature (Zacharoula Christopoulou), Julia Tulke (Visual and Cultural Studies), Classics and Modern Greek (Theodoros Chiotis), and more others. My contribution has been both theoretical and practical, and originally dealt with urban activities occurring within a specific framework: Athens' city centre. However, it was

the fieldwork itself that led me to examine wider areas of the city to evidence the proliferation of the phenomenon. As far as the scholarly research mentioned above is concerned, it particularly focuses on interventions that occurred in the city centre and visually representational forms, often easily identified as ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’, or linguistic elements, e.g., slogans. However, this engagement sometimes facilitates emerging artistry or the discussion of socio-political connotations around the examined photographic subject matter. In contrast to this, apart from moving towards wider areas of the city to identify the dynamic potential of the ‘derma’ (city skin), I do not specifically focus on them as mere details (often intentionally made, e.g., graffiti). Instead, I seek to handle the wholeness, anonymity, and unintentional activity (e.g., the layers of posters as constructive materials of the skin). Also, their [scholars] visual engagement relies on photography and some map indications of spots of activity. On the contrary, I formulate a new methodology for documentation. The initial photography of city wanderings and periodical fieldwork produces 3D representations, 3D models with relevant accuracy in detail, and new fragments with their own blurry and faded details. My frame is expanded to include more spatial documentation, without any effort to represent or give exceptional prominence to a specific form, e.g., graffiti. Although an initial focal subject can be noticed, for instance, a post-box, it is mostly recorded as the medium of the skin’s proliferation and how it serves it. The fragmented models have the potential to function as stand-alone virtual realities capable of bringing to light new forms, objects, and ruins from this period. To bring to light some of the accumulated data, the collected and edited material is finally embedded in new maps, producing a visual data bank of the chosen city spot. This subversive mapping of indifferent or apparently invisible spaces of the city acts as a ‘de-mapping’ of ordinary Google Maps and will be examined later in this thesis. Ordinary city courses result in new imageries and imaginative urban dimensions.

1.4 Mapping and De-mapping the Crisis

An essential argument for making maps of the crisis deals with how the evidence of its existence can be visualised or how its visual components can be traced and put down for further and future understanding of the current era. Considering the ephemeral nature of urban traces subject to weathering and human interactions (and the ‘clean city’ strategy), such a map would raise their existential dimension. As Smart (2004) notices, ‘the marks found in the caves of our ancestors have been interpreted as maps, and every society that has

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existed throughout history, in every corner of the globe, has created its own maps' (p. 11). Smart's remark on the primitive carved traces as 'maps' shows the potential of any inscribed trace during the crisis to act as a map. The engagement with traces and graffiti goes deep back in time. For instance, Jack Lindsay (1966), in the book *The Writing on the Wall: An Account of Pompeii in Its Last Days*, relies on the graffiti writings found on the walls of buildings in Pompeii as the medium for understanding this ancient culture better (Abel, Buckley, 1977, p. 4). My research's 'de-maps' and 'de-mapping' will not provide locations for graffiti, street art, or slogans on a given Athenian map. De-mapping aims to de-contextualise the original map from any expected anticipation of seeing phantasmagoric sightseeing of urban culture or promoting artists. Instead, it suggests new 'sightseeing': the crude evidence of the crisis with no intention for glamorisation. Athens in crisis has its one soul reflected on its surfaces: trauma and hopes, struggle and uncertainty for an unknown future. A map that will focus on this geographic understanding through its visualised psyche (psycho-geography) has to stress what this specific city's people have experienced and what and why they keep on tracing on their neighbourhoods' surfaces. In his essay *Theory of the Dérive*, Guy Debord ([1958] 2006) quoted Chombart de Lauwe's (1952) argument on psychogeography, pointing out that 'an urban neighbourhood is determined not only by geographical and economic factors but also by the image that its inhabitants and those of other neighbourhoods have of it' (p. 62). The 'geographical and economic factors' could be touristic and directed wanderings in Athens, through a controlled map of sightseeing. A de-map can offer the inner (hidden, difficult to understand) layers of the city: 'the image that its inhabitants... have of it', as de Lauwe (1952) addressed just above, the image that its inhabitants produced. A de-map will use as subject matter various realities (closed stores and their transformable facades, normally invisible urban objects, walls, etc.) and consider them out of the context of being vandalised with graffiti or out of their invisibility. If a *flâneur* refers to a primitive idler or a silent poet, and what reflects a *flâneur* is the image of a lonely man who observes and walks around (Solnit, 2001, p. 199), my role and *dérive* to gather the de-maps material is of one who is walking around alone, observing the surfaces and the space around. The 'silent poet' in my *flânerie* is myself, who overhears the sounds of Athens; a familiar language (slogans, posters in the native language, Greek) spreads around. The 'silent poet' who looks at the city as a huge urban collage. Each piece of it is a unique fragment that perfectly fitted in with its adjacent one, and their echo invites me to get my mobile camera out of my pocket and embark on recording their (micro-)cosmos. The idea of mapping the derma emerges through the choice of scattered city points and the visual proof of how any available surface of volume within the city is hosted or 'absorbed' into this skin.

1.5 A multiple layering process unfolds the crisis on the public surfaces of Athens

As I have pointed out so far, the idea of examining the skin of Athens in crisis as a PhD project began to emerge from several slogans that appeared during the December 2008 uprising and the primary stages of the economic crisis. From the early years of the crisis, I discovered that the appropriation of urban surfaces was a vital means for people to be heard and exchange their voice through marking, writing, tracing, gluing, and ungluing—a visual protest as if a polyphonic collage was unfolding throughout the city. This activity was thus ‘a response to the economic depression, social upheavals, and precariousness surrounding the writers and as an act of civil disobedience and political protest in the context of the Greek economic crisis’ (Zaimakis, 2015b, p. 373).

This visual response would have a massive and proliferated presence, in successive and accelerated layers upon layers, at the point of encountering an omnipresent skin that hijacked the former available public surfaces while concealing them. From the early beginning of the crisis, one would notice, on the one hand, the spray-painted messages (or those made from markers) partially covering and semi-obsuring the wall bases where accommodated. Messages such as ‘That’s enough’ and ‘Action replaces tears’ (Spyropoulos, 2013, p. 12) would bear the traumatic experience of the crisis through the handwriting and personal alphabets of their writers. In the second stage, on the other hand, the widespread closure of the stores—as a consequence of the crisis affecting commerce—would provide additional space for ‘adding’ further and more material layers this time: a gradual massive poster covering together with the overwriting merged into a new unity: the skin of Athens in crisis. This spatiality addressed the impact of the crisis on the people and ‘within this palimpsest of distinctive political voices, a rich repertory of collective action was developed: graffiti, posters, stickers, banners, squatting, and politicized music concerts’ (Zaimakis, 2015b, p. 379).

What makes verbal and visual expression omnipresent in the urban sphere during the period of crisis and becomes fundamental in my research is the role of the city surfaces themselves. From their apparently concrete, constructive character, they finally function as mediums. They stimulate action as though they were canvases, or an immense ‘paper’ ready for historic testimonies, through inscriptions, of the current era.

If Baudrillard (1981), referring to May ’68 in Paris, remarked that ‘the real revolutionary media were the walls and their speech’ (p. 176), in Athens instead we notice an appropriation

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of any available public space. However, the necessity is the same: the individuals seek a space (or spaces) where discourse could begin and be exchanged. For them, the immediate inscriptions and graffiti encoded a revolutionary practice of communication and were ‘given and returned, spoken and answered, mobile in the same place and time, reciprocal and antagonistic’ (1981, p. 176). The socio-political context of the slogans and handwritten messages transformed the public space of Athens into ‘a public notice board’ (Panagopoulos, 2013). As I mentioned at length in the introduction at that time, this optic polyphony of personal fonts urged me to begin to create my own alphabets through printmaking techniques. Indicative material on how I dealt with skins in my printmaking experimentations can be seen in Appendix 2.

Above, I referred to ‘experience and recording’ as the common denominator that has stimulated the practice of my research project. Indeed, my photographic recordings periodically charted this evolution of layers throughout the years of the crisis. I went, however, beyond photographic approaches to the same subject (Athens public space), such as the documentation that the photographer Takis Spyropoulos (2013) suggests in his book, *X-ARCHEIA uncensored*. Spyropoulos’ core component is to display and focus on graffiti and slogans. Yet, I transcended that: since the crisis was deepening, I also recorded the metamorphosis of the closed stores covered by paper masses (posters).

Given that my PhD research mostly includes material based on fieldwork in Athens since December 2018, I decided to place below, side by side, images collected in January 2012 (fig. 1-4) to show the extension of the phenomenon of urban layering throughout time, as well as its persistence. This may justify how the collection of material for years, the immersive experience of wandering and, unconsciously, receiving these images provided innovative potential in printmaking. My experimentations concerning printed skins based on traditional printmaking techniques are gathered in Appendix 2.

The images below (fig. 1-4) display the showcases of a closed store at the beginning of Vouliagmenis Avenue (Mets area), far from the city centre, namely the principally examined area where the consequences of the crisis were rather obvious as far as commerce is concerned.



Figure 1 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A closed store, 2012. Photography. Beginning of Vouliagmenis Ave. (Mets area) 11743, Athens. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 2 Panagiotis Ferentinos, detail of the showcase. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Figure 3 Panagiotis Ferentinos, detail of the showcase. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

By isolating the part of the showcase covered by shredded posters (fig. 3-4), the resulting iconography seems to be like a ‘metope’ of contemporary scenery. They are the ruins of the current era that cohabit with the ancient metopes and triglyphs just a few miles further, evidence of the ancient past of the same city. The first is obviously made from paper, an ephemeral element, and will soon be replaced by others. The only way to preserve them is by recording them. The second was made from marble and preserved for centuries as part of the Greek civilisation. Both, however, coexist and belong to the historical course of the same place: Athens.

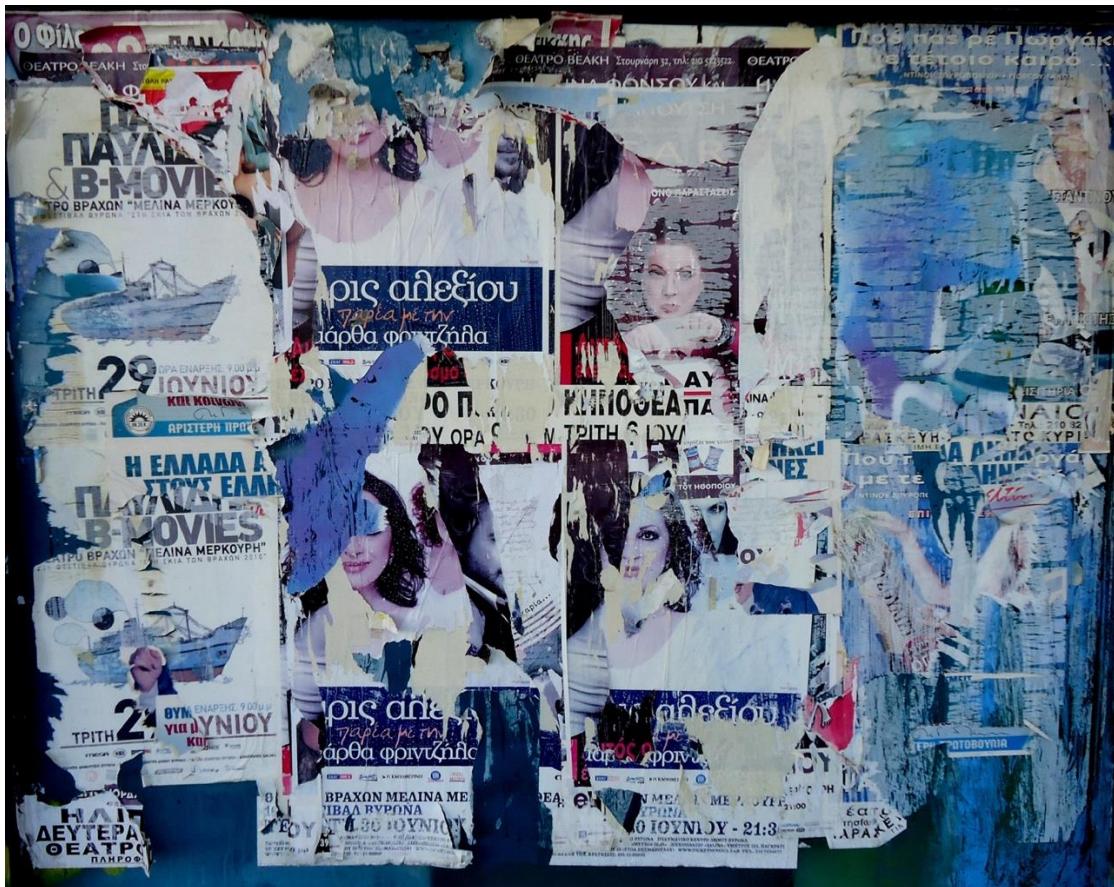


Figure 4 Panagiotis Ferentinos, detail of the showcase. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

This coexistence is of pivotal importance in my research, provided that it suggests two different historical layers of my subject area and fieldwork in Athens. Given that I examine its urban space, various temporal layers stand side by side and are reflected in my practice through an abstractive approach of layering as an imprint. The above reference to the ‘metope’, implying the Parthenon Sculptures (Marbles) and used metaphorically for the fragmented current scenery on the showcase (fig. 3-4), denotes only two layers of Athenian history: antiquity and current times. Yet, this choice is not made randomly. Athens is considered to be ‘the ideal capital where there is a deliberate selection of artefacts that emphasize classical antiquity at the expense of other epochs’ (McNeal, 1991, p. 49). Antiquity played a considerable role in the formation of Greek identity after Greece’s independence from the Ottomans. In an attempt to argue on this matter, the archaeologist Yannis Hamilakis in his book *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (2007) ‘aims to explore the role of classical antiquities and archaeology in the formation of the national imagination and its materialisation’ (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 130). The significance of this effort by the archaeologist community relates to how ‘the social lives, roles, and meanings of ancient material culture and antiquities [can be seen and examined] in a modern social context, that of Greece’; indeed, this is ‘a meaningful reworking and re-appropriation of ancient things for current concerns and purposes’ (Hamilakis, 2007, p. 74).

In this effort to find meaning and link between the past identity and the most recent one, my research on current historical layers and their recording will provide archaeological evidence of Greek ethnography and identity today. I refer to the term ‘archaeological’ for my body of work, providing that archaeology signifies for Greece its historical continuity, the link between past and present, and potentially the future. Hamilakis (2007) develops a theory on Greek archaeology as a secular religion of the nation—that is, antiquity—and how ‘archaeologists act as the “priests” of this religion, as mediators between the past and the present, while monuments are its icons’ (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 131). In comparison to nowadays, the crisis leaves behind monuments such as the showcase above, namely present ruins, and these are its icons. If one visits and wanders around Athens to see and admire the ruins of the past, they will unavoidably encounter the transient ruins and outcomes of the crisis as well. They will thus experience the layers of Athens’s existence through time.

Chapter 2 Terminologies - Definitions

In this section, I map a specialised vocabulary, a ‘lexicon’, and analyse at a primary stage the most frequent terms within the scope of the thesis. This is an attempt to gather all the relevant information in one place, including the terminology used for them and the definitions given to them due to the research done in this study.

2.1 The skin, the body: Athens as a contested space - Why examining Athens in economic crisis through its surfaces

To position this research, it is essential to consider how the urban surface-skin of Athens evolves during the economic crisis. A number of my pivotal objectives are summed up in the following hypotheses: What kind of activities, writings, or messages are expressed on the city’s surfaces? How is each of these visualised actions linked to a particular period of the crisis? To what kind of spaces (surfaces) did the crisis allow room for interaction for the actors, lending entire blocks of abandoned [ruined] closed stores to a visual appropriation? How did the extensive expansion of the crisis, visibly evident and experienced, gradually formulate the Athenian fabric, a ‘skin’, rendering it a distinctive case of economic crisis to study? Through the examination of the cityscape’s skin, we may be able to see how Athens in crisis develops its imagery and how the crisis is narrated through this imagery.

Athens obtains corporeality, a bodily existence, embodying voices, and echoes of how individuals reflect and respond to the imposed recession. Its architectural shapes are the armatures and the skeleton, on which this body and skin are taking place. Tilley (2008) argues that the term ‘embodiment’ is central to a phenomenological experience of the landscape, as it occurs through the medium of the individuals’ ‘sensing and sensed carnal body’ (p. 271). The city itself becomes the medium, and the human subjects enter into it and allow it to have ‘its own impact on their perspective understandings’ (2008, p. 271). When people in Athens were gradually experiencing the massive closures of stores and the new reality of ruins enforced on the commercial vibrancy of the city, they were able to visualise the crisis through its visualised form. It is the human subject’s immersion in space and the experience of it that allows insights to be achieved so that we claim that space has agency about people (Tilley, 2008, p. 271).

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However, how does a crisis affect the social fabric and relationships in the space where individuals live? By examining this firm link between space and Greece's socio-political conditions, we might be able to perceive the particular case of Athens imagery during the crisis. In the book *Contested Spaces in the City – Spatial Approaches to Culture*, Giannakopoulos and Giannitsiotis (2010) argue that in the social sciences, a spatial approach to the city intertwines with power-resistance relations (p. 11). The geographical areas within a city (buildings, roads, neighbourhoods, monuments, parks, etc.) or even the city as a whole, are fields of manifestation of social and cultural conflicts aimed at control, use, management, and their appropriation (2010, p. 12). The reference to particular spaces within the city ('geographical regions') and the transition to the 'city as a whole' corresponds to my research's main intention of how Athens passed through different gradual stages of transformation so that I now examine the idea of a skin rather than a mere inscriptions' case study. Additionally to this, not only regions—that may imply local impoverishment or marginalised groups living in an area—but also urban objects (pillars, metal boxes, post-boxes, etc.) were included and absorbed in this greater idea of skin, denoting a greater and wider necessity of space of expression and control. Hence, it is pivotal to stress how the crisis has caused this phenomenon and urged 'conflicts aimed at control, use, management and appropriation'. The city constitutes a predominantly 'contested space', namely a privileged place of study for the construction of the spatiality of the relations of power and resistance (Giannakopoulos, Giannitsiotis, 2010, p. 12).

Given that the crisis has had different unfolding phases, one may consider how the Athenian cityscape has been constantly under construction, formed, and reshaped based on the different experiences and actions of the subjects who come in contact with it (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 316). Cities are dynamic, living organisms in which space and people mutually create each other. The visual appropriation of the city, though, for instance, graffiti and street art, captures these socio-spatial interactions between the placement of people and the ways humans inhabit and (in)form their spaces. Thus, looking at the marks and writing on the walls offers valuable insights into the polyvalent character of our urban realities. (Avramidis, Tsilimpounidi, 2017, p. 2).

2.2 Athens as a Collage

The idea of examining Athens in crisis as a collage, first addresses the issue of how its urban imagery is arranged and re-arranged in a way that can be seen through various perspectives associated with collage. Hoffman (1989) opens up the term, referring to how forms with different initial functions can obtain new identities or functionality through collaged compositions, given that a ‘collage may be seen as a quintessential twentieth-century art form with multiple layers and signposts pointing to a variety of forms and realities and the possibility or suggestion of countless new realities’ (p. 7). In comparison to that, my research seeks within the Athenian imagery to unveil how any available surface and even the indifferent and unnoticed urban objects—such as post-boxes, pillars, or other metal boxes—are transformed into mediums of multivalent expression. How they become both parts and ‘armatures’ over which the development of skin with socio-political connotations has taken place. Through my practice, this dimension of examining a ‘collaged city’ dredges up these city forms from indifference and oblivion and puts them in new assemblages from various directions. In a ‘collage city’, these urban shapes are not only mere parts of a greater iconography; they are also messengers and bearers of the meanings of their time. It reminds us of Hoffman’s (1989) viewpoint that ‘collage in the twentieth century has emerged as both a medium and an idea’ (p. 7). As I mentioned above, in my engagement, I approach both perspectives based on fieldwork in Athens, its outcomes, and any further visual development.

As a starting point, an effort to understand Athens’ imagery as a collaged composition is mostly based on a figurative adoption of the term ‘collage’. It may correspond to Colin Rowe’s and Fred Koetter’s *Collage City* (1983) and their attempt to re-examine contemporary theories of urban planning and design and the role of the architect-planner in an urban context (Appleyard, 1983, n.p.). As ‘collage’ has therefore played a role in developing architectural ideas, I will also suggest how it is involved with the architectural volumes of Athens (walls, surfaces, city objects, pavements, etc.). In *Collage City* (1983), the authors reject the grand utopian visions of ‘total planning’ and ‘total design’; instead, they point to a ‘collage city’ that can ‘accommodate a whole range of utopias (in miniature)’. It is suggested to architects, providing ‘conceptions about the ideal city; it reorients the conceptions from the utopia of a single vision to a more multivalent view of the city form’ (Appleyard, 1983, n.p.). From their point of view, an ideal city is a multifaceted one with multi-valued visions. In my research, I discuss how Athens urban imaginary may be seen as a collage city, accommodating a vast variety of echoes and expressions in a visual ‘polyglot’

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way. Thus, Athens becomes the paradigm of a city that visually narrates and finally arranges various utopias, dreams, and a need for change on its own derma (skin).

Kjellman-Chapin (2006, p. 86), relying on the definition of collage as a work of art where various materials normally disconnected have adhered to a single surface ('Collage', 2012), stresses the importance of an artist's involvement in the process. The unquestionable nature of a collage as 'a work of art' addresses how its compositional elements are initially produced elsewhere and how the final collage is an outcome beyond them (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006, p. 90). Certainly, in Athens, no actor is consciously engaged in an intentional collage process as an artist. An individual who writes a slogan on a wall may not be an artist. Those who stick posters are not artists either; they are just employees paid a few euros per hour. We could thus admit that the skin's fabrication embeds the collage's qualities, but it crosses the threshold of a deliberate collage. Yet can we recognise art qualities in the city's visual narratives so that we might refer to an urban, self-managed collage? This question is significant if we are to make a distinction between meaningful and targeted socio-culturally driven or politically driven art as opposed to the 'naturally' occurring layered new surface.

A potential answer may lie in the powerful dynamic of the street surface as a bearer of history, against which no art would compete. In fact, during my fieldworks in Athens, there were numerous times I was impressed by the dynamic abstract quality and quaint 'mastery' of the self-managed urban collaged surfaces, due to random interventions (adding and detracting) and weathering. This deeper 'getting to know' of the city, through wandering and acute observation of astonishing [randomly made] urban collages led me to a subconscious decision to add more and more spaces and projects to my recordings. I acted like this as a 'rescuer' to be able to show and share these images. By saying that, one may wonder if these fragmented imageries could act in the future as alternative ethnographic evidence of the current era. I am currently unable to predict their prospective use by other disciplines (archaeology, history, etc.). However, according to Armstrong (2010), 'the task of ghost ethnography is to excavate the traces of past lives and cultures that have been inscribed into the materiality of place and to allow these "ghost texts"—"haunted" spaces and objects—to speak for themselves' (p. 246). May a documented skin address alternative historic interpretations and respond to an open museum of collage masterpieces altogether? Giroud (2008) argues [apropos the billboards of posters in the Parisian cityscape] that 'there is only one way to save and systematically collect, with whole direct debits, these anonymous panels, witnesses of the passage of time, real ready-mades' (p. 10). Kalofolias (2013) suggests 'Where does graffiti go when people erase it? If we could have them coexist, we

would see in front of us another kind of history of the city' (p. 5). François Bon in *Peeling Back the Layers of Time* (2007) gives prominence to this connection between historic testimony and Jacques Villeglé's work (namely the purely peeled-off urban skins shown as de-collages), as if it is 'part of the history of the city, putting a face on what did not make history' (p. 166). It is therefore the artist's translation of the city, the utilisation of its pieces as historic evidence through preservation, as in my case, the recording and further prominence of the Athenian fragments of crisis. Bon (2007) continues by saying that the artist's work is a 'sign of everything visual, of the perishable, ephemeral diaries of walls, of their wordless story, of the heavy, earnest history that would smother any art that tried to look it straight in the face' (p. 166). The urban surfaces functioned as a stimulus for me as well, to choose and conserve this self-arranged reality. I was inspired to record the various 'time-lapses' of Athens that witnessed this process of metamorphosis. Each stage provided particular socio-political information and material about the events taking place in the city, whereas the colourful posters always reconstructed the image of the city. The city may not be arranged by artists, but it inspires art approaches to contribute in turn to the outcomes of this inspiration. In Burhan Dogancay's 'collage paintings', the artist brings together layers of colourful posters, graffiti, objects, and other materials found in cities all over the world. His major purposes were to communicate messages of contemporary life and express the many moods of particular moments in time, but what makes his art distinctive from his contemporaries is that 'the poetry he perceives at the level of the street is that of anonymity organising itself as art' (Taylor, 2008, p. 32). In Athens, it is the anonymous actor that produces this imagery of crisis; my role comes afterwards when I walk around, observe, and record the outcomes. In Villeglé's case, we notice that the artist establishes the status of the collector and his collection: 'The choice is a creative (and modest) act that at the same time pays tribute to the anonymous crowd and the nature of the elements' (Giroud, 2008, p. 10). I also act as a collector, yet my documents are not physical or material. My initial role is that of someone who digitally (photographically) saves the historical moments of the city. As far as this kind of appropriation and the role of the collector is concerned, François Bon (2007) wonders if Villeglé is finally considered an artist; given that he 'strictly tries to force us to eliminate him as an artist' (p. 167). Through my virtual appropriation, I do not intend to prove my artistic role or to find a positionality as an artist (for instance, where I position myself), but to bring to light all these Athenian imageries of crisis through my potential and gained knowledge of fine art practices using technology, 3D, and other contemporary means. By dredging these imageries up and showing their powerful narrative potential, the artist's

role becomes multivalent; he is the medium that ‘transmits and gives voice and not his voice to the anonymous acts that are forgotten, neglected or refused’ (Giroud, 2008, p. 11).

2.3 Derma – the skin of the city

The idea of the derma (skin) examines the surface of Athens and the inscribed activity on it. It perceives it as an entirety, as a distinctive ‘skin’, rather than centring on any compositional component (slogans, graffiti, street art, etc.). This idea derived from an account of my whole practice-based project. To be precise, it emerged from fieldwork research in Athens and proceeded to archiving, editing, rebuilding 3D models, and any further art approach (print, installation, etc.). During my fieldwork, I concluded that any potential surface had participated in this intervening urban process. The antipode was the idea of the ‘clean city’, promoted by the mayor of Athens via his social media, which included any surface of the city and its cleanliness.

Any of my attempts to foray into theoretical recourses and literature on Athens mostly focused on the socio-political connotations of graffiti and street art. Yet, very limited information was describing the phenomenon overall or clearly ‘speaking up’ about a whole skin covering the city. I could not rely on mainstream forms or interview street artists who have been using the crisis’s framework to perhaps promote political art. As Franca Filho (2016) foregrounds, ‘Graffiti has increased its prestige as an artistic manifestation year after year. In some places, they have even become tourist attractions. Galleries and museums all over the world devote valued spaces to that cultural object’ (p. 1344).

Certainly, the objective may not always be ‘sightseeing promotion’. However, even unconsciously, all this emphasis on graffiti and street art ‘of crisis’ by scholars, groups, and artists may render the city a tourist attraction, contrary to the reality examined in this research: an overloaded city with traces pointing to a case of skin. *Urban Layers* (2021) goal is ‘to create a digital and physical community that raises awareness for street art and graffiti through participation’. As we see on their site (fig. 5-6), one can visit a map that charts places where graffiti and street art are located. By clicking on a pin, you discover the location of the graffiti and the name of the artist(s).

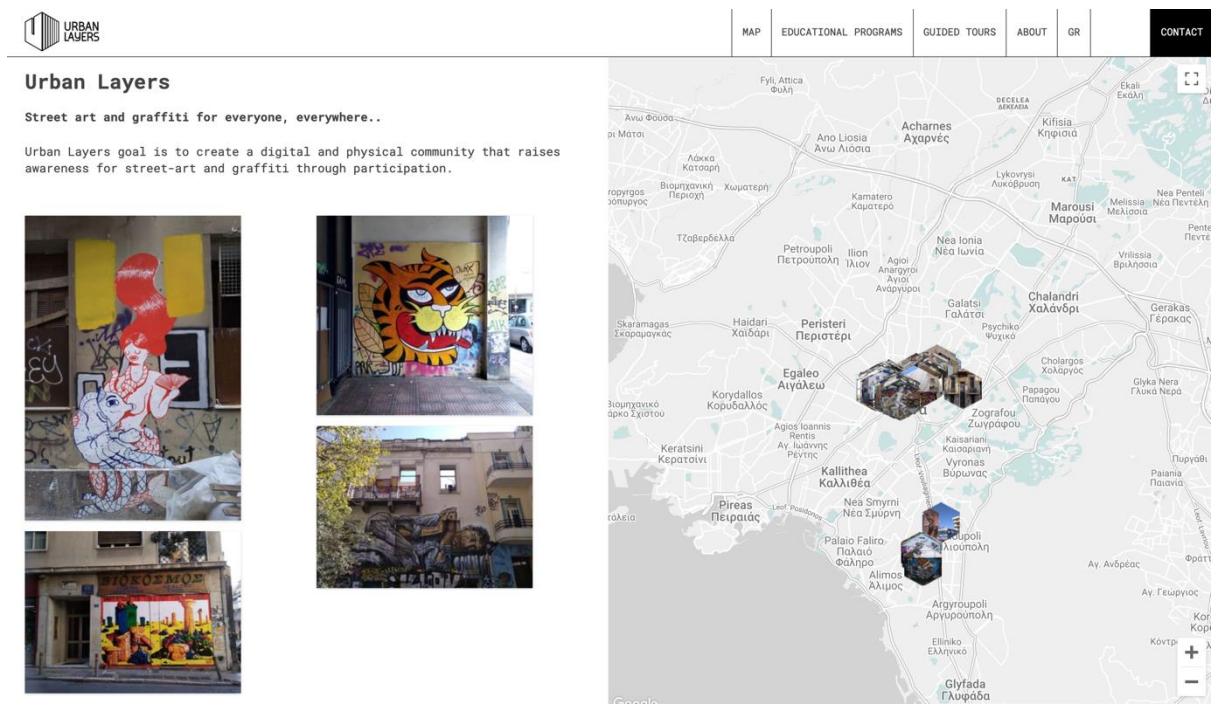


Figure 5 *Urban Layers*, 'Urban Layers' main page, 2021. Screenshot. ©Urban Layers 2021.

In the section 'Guided Tours' (fig. 5) we notice images of groups of people having a guided tour around areas where graffiti and street art are represented. A tour guide provides information, and people are displayed while taking photographs of this urban spectacle. In one of the images, we see at least three people concentrated on simultaneously capturing the same exhibit. If one were not aware of what the subject is (we assume it is graffiti), we might easily be persuaded that the image addresses an ancient ruin, e.g., the Parthenon, and people pay homage to it via their camera's clicks. In this way, we sense that Athens is promoted (and chosen) for alternative touristic visits or a combination, parallel to visiting the ancient heritage.

What probably catches one's attention is the section 'Educational Programmes' (fig. 5) oriented towards primary and secondary education students. It provides pupils with 'artistic creation' amongst other activities. An indicative photo on the left shows a young boy with a mask, gloves, and hood applying spray-paint to a wall. Considering the Athenian imagery full of writings and inscriptions, the image may imply how a younger generation experiences this urban culture and learns from an early age to be an active part of it. They are, hence, visually nourished within this imagery, and they will produce it, visualising their own narratives.

Chapter 2

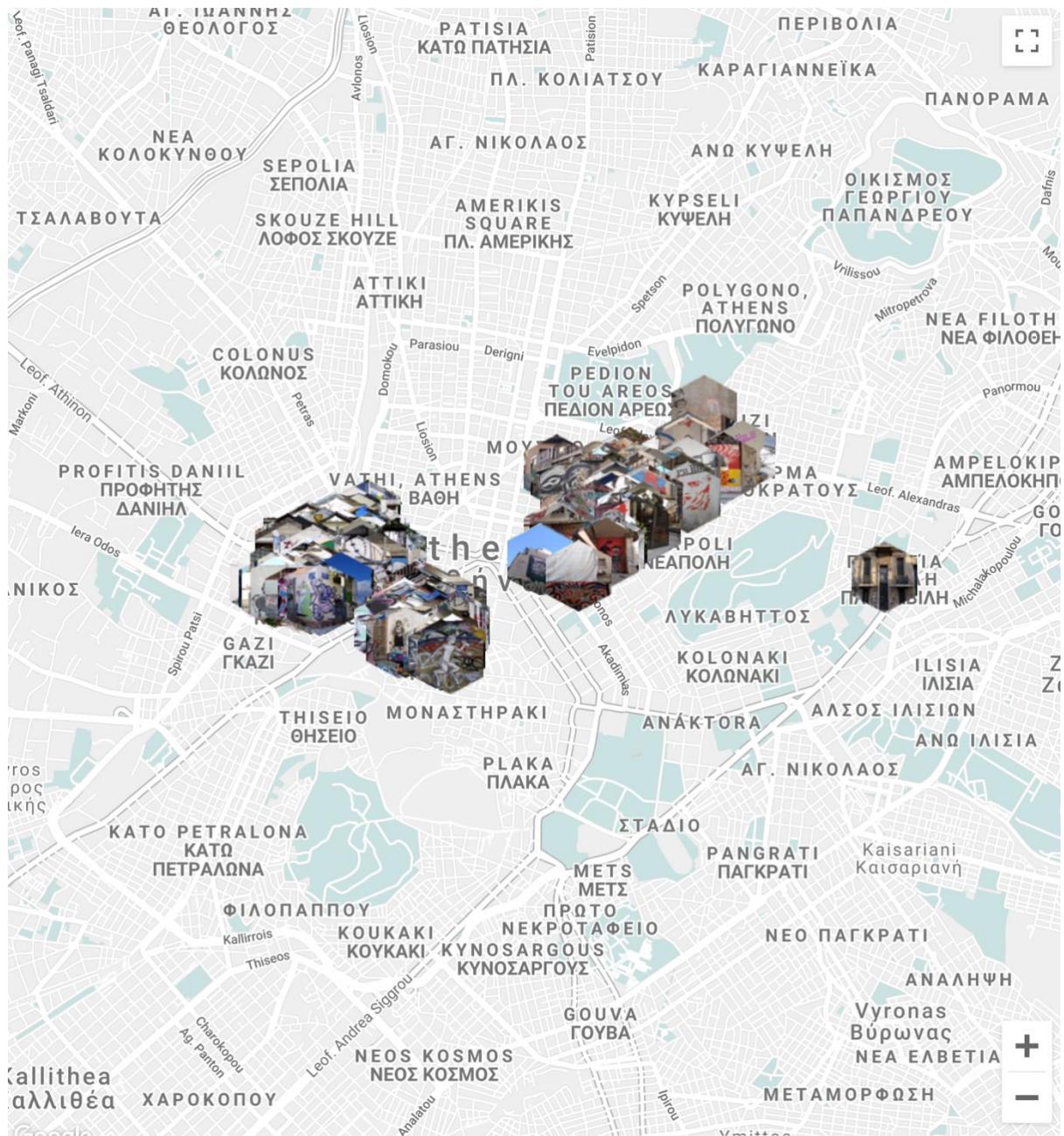


Figure 6 *Urban Layers*, Part of the online map, displaying a high condensation of street art and graffiti in the city's centre and areas around. Screenshot. ©Urban Layers 2021.

However, how could one insist on the existence of skin when these spots on *Urban Layer*'s map are mere details of a greater picture? The represented graffiti on their page may no longer continue to be on the spot. Their survival has been threatened since the very first moment of their production. Another agent may have erased them or written on top of them; even the municipality might have whitewashed them. The writing activity represents a particular moment, and the very next second, it becomes past. Yet the idea of the skin relies on its long-lasting activity: the relentless layering, the palimpsest. It does not recognise or pay tribute to precise graffiti, promote artists, or ask for interviews from them. Any detail, wittingly or unwittingly written, marked, or glued, participates in and contributes to the skin.

The anonymous trace, bearing no artistry or mastery to demonstrate, is equally powerful and constructive for any recognised and technically ‘right’ urban form. If we move back to *Urban Layer’s* ‘Map’ section and randomly select a pin, we will notice images as shown on the left side of the following two figures (7-8):



Figure 7 *Urban Layers*, *Urban palimpsest in Athens I*, 2021. Screenshot. ©Urban Layers 2021.



Figure 8 *Urban Layers*, *Urban palimpsest in Athens II*, 2021. Screenshot. ©Urban Layers 2021.

The page provides the date of uploading and the name of the artist. At first glance, we might perceive in the artist's production the most representational forms: a lady embracing an animal (fig. 7) and a portrait (fig. 8). Now, if we meticulously check out the same images on the right, we will encounter a great deal of other visual interventions (circled and arrowed in red colour). Several questions may arise: who is their maker (artist)? Are they art? What writing was placed first, and what followed? However, as far as the idea of the skin is concerned, did a picture as documentation succeed in isolating and representing the artist's piece? In fact, without all the other elements (that interrelate with the most representational form), the skin would never exist. A single framed image would be enough to represent the graffiti. On the contrary, it is obvious in these visuals that the inscriptions carry on and go beyond the edges of the suggested images.

All this overlapped and intertwined visual activity suggests the idea of a skin that proliferates and covers walls, windows, front doors, etc. Specifically, it conquers all the surfaces of the city. At this point, a limitation in research is raised: mere images cannot represent the skin in total. The activity expands in time and space, changes without ceases, and only selected evidence may be contributed and examined. Yet, any proof displayed in this research will attempt to provide a satisfactory testimony to the discussion of a skin based on fieldwork, visuals, and theoretical advocacy.

2.4 The city is the message, the skin is the message

To further understand the idea of the skin, it is initially necessary to examine its qualities. How its compositional elements (e.g., graffiti) enrich it or have similarities and differences with it, or if the whole (as a derma) differentiates itself from the details and moves beyond them in content and meaning. Two main questions will be addressed below: what kind of medium an urban skin is, and what kind of message it conveys. Do they finally intersect so that the medium is also the message? Namely, are Athens and its derma the medium and message of the crisis simultaneously?

Approaching this question, a differentiation might be detected between graffiti (a sub-element of the skin) and the skin itself. The skin addresses a reality that is materially suggested and has a clear meaning altogether: the crisis has its iconography; it occupies space, and this haptic, tangible occupation signifies its meaning as well. The crisis is not a verbally discussed venture; it has a face, and we inextricably encounter it every day. Medium

(skin) and message (skin again) are in total accord. Nonetheless, graffiti, as one of its constituent components, does not connect its medium of realisation with its political meaning. Lewisohn (2008), in his book *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution* refers to the renowned Marshall McLuhan's phrase 'the medium is the message': 'Graffiti, however, is most associated with spray paint as a medium, but very rarely is this medium the subject of the graffiti' (p. 107). Yet, we can detect some inherited qualities of graffiti that identify its nature. According to Phillips (1996), the term *graffiti* is used to describe 'an arrangement of institutionally illicit marks in which there has been an attempt to establish some sort of coherent composition'. The appropriated walls and surfaces are mostly located in public view, and the makers of these marks are not necessarily professional artists. The reference to 'illicit marks' also characterises the skin, as it is obvious that a whole city cannot be officially and openly overwritten. The sense of an overwhelmingly marked city implies that either the authorities do not proceed with any action of cleaning, or the phenomenon is so uncontrollable that they are not able to manage it. As far as the reference to 'artists' is concerned, even though they are 'not generally professional artists' (Phillips, 1996), the idea of the skin does not denote artistry or 'a sort of coherent composition'. Even an anonymous marking agent unconsciously contributes to the skin. Thereby, the employees of advertising companies or those individuals who are not employed and just glue posters of their political ideas do not consider any composition when they put multiple posters in a row on the walls. Certainly, they are not engaged with spray paints, stencils, or markers. Lewisohn (2008) discusses the most frequent medium for graffiti, spray paint, yet it is not the medium itself that interests the graffiti writers. However, he stresses the problematic nature of the engagement with the techniques:

'For graffiti writing to function as graffiti writing, it has to adhere to certain rules. One or two of the rules can be broken, but if they are completely dismantled, it becomes harder to read images as graffiti. Factors such as style and intention become vital in assessing such images'. (p. 107)

By that means, the style and compliance with rules are essential to considering an urban form as 'graffiti'. If, however, we go back to the images above (fig. 7-8), all those markings around, beneath, or on top of the representational forms (graffiti) stand-alone, without compositional arrangements or obeying rules. They just proliferate beyond the frame of a picture, stressing the notion of skin rather than works of art. The medium can still imply qualities and characterise the skin, as it involves the illicit nature of the can of paint or the brush. Phillips (1996) points to the necessity of a fast medium that can 'be applied to most

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surfaces' as a need for handling 'size, visibility, speed, and convenience'. For facilitating and shortening the intervention, 'the ideal vehicle is the spray-can, which combines medium and applicator into one relatively small parcel that is easily concealed, transportable and easy to use'.

How many writings, marks, and traces have passed from the cold concrete buildings' constructions, so that each one of them bears something from the history, hopes, dreams, disappointment, anger, etc. of people living in this city? All these were met in the same space, intertwined, and overlapped, producing the skin of their city.

This idea suggests fragmentation: fragments of temporal layers, of collective memory, of various layers of history. Indeed, this fragmentation process that assembles the contemporary derma also implies how Greeks have inherited and perceived their history, namely fragments of the past that piece together their own identity through collective memory. An indicative example of valuable fragments is the Parthenon Marbles. A multifarious, complex issue discussed by Hamilakis (2007) in terms of the sculpture's 'anthropomorphism, fragmentation, pain of dismemberment and mutilation, homeland-exile, reunification-repatriation, recollection of fragments, reconstitution of whole' (p. 277), in quest of national imagination and the role of [the fragments of] antiquity in Greek identity. The fragmentation here addresses a national lust for re-unification with the sculptures as if they are living entities, 'nostalgia for the whole', firmly associated with the perception of antiquities in current times (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 132). Let us imagine then how the current fragments of crisis, as real living entities (as the Marbles are considered), will function as a link between the current Greek identity and the future collective memory. This certifies a broader link of continuity: ruins of the past (antiquity) and ruins of the present enfold in the skin of the same city.

Andrew Irving in *The Skin of the City* (2006) stresses that biographies and personal histories connect people to a broader social memory and the way they mediate their experience of the city; this is a well-established scholarly problem that anthropologists encounter during fieldwork, linked to the anthropology of memory (p. 12-13). The Athenian skin, to be developed and expanded, took so much time throughout the crisis, still carrying even those layers (echoes) that are not now visible. Its embedded collective memory mediates the experiences that people have had while living in the city. In the current research, a decision to examine the skin brings to light the continuity and successiveness of the collective urban act instead of investigating merely representative forms such as graffiti, slogans, and street

art. It allows room for seeing the general picture, and a methodology to retrieve past layers may contribute to the preservation of collective imagery rather than several visuals. Yet, the dynamic of the skin lies in its persistence to be present as a whole, as it is almost impossible to ‘bring events from the past into life given that there is no independent access to people’s past, consciousness, and memory’ (Irving, 2006, p. 13). This limitation in research, being unable to fully recover any written past trace, accounts for how only fragments of a former period can be regained. The adoption of searching for evidence through Google Maps as a methodological approach for seeing through prior realities of the city acts as a medium to recall any (even limited) past visualised urban memory that is available. Johannes Fabian (2003) argues that the mediator for any social interaction is memory, and thus ethnography’s primary goal is to get people to remember (p. 492).

2.5 Palimpsest

The word ‘palimpsest’ seems appropriate for the surfaces of Athens. It derives from the Greek word *palímpsētos*, namely ‘rubbed again’: *pálin* ['again'] + *psēstós* ['scraped, rubbed'] (‘Palimpsest’, 2012).

Applied to the investigation of Athens surfaces, the reference to ‘again’ implies a repetition—a repeatedness of an act that provides an extension in time to the phenomenon of urban overwriting. It also denotes that the surface remains the same (the architectural volumes of Athens), and any scrape is placed on top of or after rubbing the prior layer. This happens when, for instance, the former coats of posters are detached, and new ones appear on the scratched surface. Palimpsest’s reference to ‘scrapping-rubbing’ clearly connotes tearing, seemingly a *décollage*’s quality to unveil what lies underneath when a surface is peeled away (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006, p. 87). Yet, the palimpsest is mostly referred to as a correspondence to a ‘layer upon layer’ process. Any removal of the prior stage serves to provide ‘new’, ‘fresh’, and additional space on top for further activity. The palimpsest activity and scratching may unveil one of the most ancient human behaviours in the caves, connecting prehistoric scratching with modern notions of graffiti. A tag sprayed onto a wall just yesterday belongs to the same group as Viking runes scratched onto the Neolithic tomb of Maes Howe on Orkney that have been classified as graffiti as well (Forster, Vettese-Foster and Borland, 2012, p. 53).

Relying on palimpsest's term as 'something that has a new layer, aspect, or appearance that builds on its past and allows us to see or perceive parts of this past' ('Palimpsest', 2012), in my research a digital version of the Athenian palimpsest can be examined. This is achieved through a virtual methodology that involves Google Maps and the potential of retrieving former layers of the same spots, even 10 years before my fieldwork started. This is also a virtual décollage approach, given that a palimpsest is 'a writing that has been partially or completely erased to make room for another text' ('Palimpsest', 2012). Most of the former visual conditions of a wall, an urban object, or a spot have not been recorded, and only partial layers of the past are provided and recovered via Google Maps. Certainly, palimpsest's reference to 'making room for another text' can be seen as a necessity for available space. Although the whole city of Athens, more or less, contributes space to writing, the same spaces are relentlessly used (a palimpsest's process), demonstrating spatial dominance and continuity (spatiotemporality).

The palimpsest process of the city's development has drastically influenced my practice through printmaking. Indeed, a plate's imprint acts as a step towards a palimpsest composition, emphasizing successive and multiple printing to produce palimpsest skins. This process, its methodology, and its results, as well as my attempt to connect the historical layering evolution of Athens with my practice, are further presented and discussed in Appendix 2.

2.6 The 'Clean City'

The urgency to document, examine, and give prominence to the Athenian urban imagery (a skin) is of pivotal importance, considering how the official authorities, such as the mayor of Athens, have taken action on vanishing the urban traces promising the 'clean city'. Pangalos (2014) argues that the excess phenomenon of graffiti in Athens is a long process that has taken years to spread out step by step and stresses the state's inability to deal with it (p. 161-162). To be precise, he underlines the fact that 'there is a strange, general tolerance and acceptance of it, by society in general and by the authorities, and the police in particular' (2014, p. 162). Considering that the financial crisis is alleged to have started in 2008, we realise that when these lines were published in 2014, the authorities 'had left the skin alone' to be developed for many years without dealing with it. The image of general abandonment and the massive closure of stores in a row (dressed up in layers of posters as detritus of

consumption) may have served the Greek governments concerning their inability to handle the crisis. Yet, the ‘clean city’ (or an attempt in this direction) could be a great promotion for any authority that would promise it. It could have constituted an optical ‘removal’ of the crisis, even though the crisis had not ended. In 2016, we noticed an effort by the former mayor of Athens, George Kaminis, to remove graffiti, while cleaning crews and volunteers took action (Newsroom, 2016). Kaminis (2016) relied on a particular lexicon for promoting his decisive action: ‘smudges’, ‘an image that diserves Athens’, ‘safeguard the public space’, calling the residents and active groups of citizens to be next to him. Then, it seemed to be easy, given that writing on the city’s surfaces can be seen as ‘a gesture of transgression’ or a ‘performative act rupturing boundaries and taboos of good taste and civil manners in a way that cannot be denied or ignored’ (Chiotis, 2015, p. 154). The mayor had therefore emphasised the illicit nature, the guarantee of public space’s protection, and the dirtiness to foster hopes of a city, a ‘clean city’, apparently saved (visually) from the crisis. Since October 2019, his successor and current mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyiannis, has been pursuing an intense campaign for the ‘clean city’, and his Instagram account has been a major space for its promotion since then. Bakoyiannis’s activity on Instagram comprises an alternative ‘fieldwork’ for my research, a virtual based one. Through his frequent posts, both the visual material and relevant political texts accompanying them, he demonstrates a strategic cleaning of the city. Indeed, in his post on August 31, 2020, he promoted a ‘new application’ oriented to making the citizen aware of ‘finding out what is going on in their neighbourhood, in their city’. This application called *Draseis* («Δράσεις», 2020), ‘Actions: Learn what is going on in your neighbourhood’, provides a map where each pin corresponds to an action (its content, and date of realisation) referring to: disinfection, cleaning, anti-graffiti, road construction works, green landscape planning, and renovations. The visitor can be informed of how many of the above-mentioned actions have been realised so far and submit a request for an action they wish to proceed with. We can obviously understand that the ‘cleaning strategy’ has acquired wider dimensions. It is expanded in a virtual space and involves broader cleaning actions relevant to the alteration of the cityscape, thus eliminating the current trace activity.

Tracing as an act is inextricably connected to human nature. As Reisner stated (1971), ‘the antiquity of graffiti cannot be denied; the man was almost from his very beginnings a doodler’ (p. 23). These early inscriptions range in form and style ‘from simplistic scratchings and trailings of wet clay to beautiful impressionistic and realistic drawings’ (p. 24) and are considered nowadays as ‘amazing depictions’ (p. 24), impressionistic drawings equal to

works of art (p. 25). Nonetheless, it is ironic that ‘the same messages, but in different times, places, and techniques, become something entirely different that is termed controversial graffiti, street art, or vandalism (Dahdal, 2017, p. 24). Nowadays, according to Chiotis (2015), the visualised activities on the walls are a negotiation of the use of space; the space is reclaimed through these interventions by the locals confronting the official state (p. 158). In other words, the inscribed traces resulting from the recession bear witness to the continuous crisis reflected on the walls and volumes of the city. On the one hand, there is the public opposition to the authorities, and on the other, there is the ‘clean city’, both of which finally narrate the historic development of contemporary Athens. The ‘clean city’ reclaims the space by contesting the ‘memory of the crisis’, which has been embedded in the visual Athenian evidence for years.

2.7 Fieldwork Research in Athens

Field-based research took place in Athens on a periodical basis from December 2018 to December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on transportation were enforced. It was completed in five stages (phases) as follows: 1) December 2018, 2) April-May 2019, 3) July 2019, 4) September 2019, and 5) December 2019. At the beginning (December 2018), the fieldwork included only four documented projects, based on prior visits and photographic recordings of precise city spots, which were detected and captured a few times since 2008 (2011, 2012, 2014, etc.). This revisit was realised due to curiosity about how those places (or spots) had evolved in terms of their visual appropriation and any activity on them, as well as their current condition. For instance, if a closed store in 2011 was still abandoned and inactive as a shop, witnessing the continuous recession and its impact on the urban sphere, but utilised in favour of a political public discourse. On the social fabric of Athens, the inscriptions that acted as a ‘visual history of nonhegemonic voices’ were stressing the socio-political frictions due to the austerity (Tsilimpounidi, 2015, p. 19), and the previously Athenian fixed cityscape was transforming into ‘a more open platform for dialogue and negotiation’ (Tsilimpounidi, Walsh, 2011, p. 111).

The process of wandering and observation, as well as the documentation, put stress through the practice on the twofold nature of the Athenian landscape: a field of relentless socio-political expression and ever-changing under ceaseless re-arrangement. The inspection of my visuals at a later stage (when returning to the UK and staying at a distance from the direct

link to the fieldwork) also helped further my deeper understanding of how the city in crisis unfolds. It also prompted me to decisively extend my projects from one phase to the next, namely in number and, by extension, in more areas. It also increased the number of images taken. The empirical approach of ‘getting to know the city’ and the gradual recognition of a skin’s existence required further evidence in number. In the existing bibliography I was examining, only single images were shown displaying a spot (mostly graffiti, a slogan, etc.), but not in full detail. A single image was unable to witness the idiosyncrasy of the scenery, its haptic nature, or the immensity of the phenomenon beyond the borders of the given photographic frame. Even for me as a Greek, having known the city for decades, from this material, one would hardly be able to realise the intention of the city’s visual appropriation, the skin, and what makes Athens urban imagery unique during the crisis. I thus decided to respond to this lack of literature and contribute to revealing the real image of the city. Through my practice, the increase in photographic material (detailed, successive, overlapping) led me to rely on 3D approaches to build up more extensive urban scenes that would lay bare the skin (immense, omnipresent). The multiple layers of images for a 3D-scanned model provided further evidence of details, tangibility, and the ‘microcosm’ of the organic construction—elements that single images in scientific papers were not able to provide.

In this direction, through a long-lasting recording and photographically cataloguing this dynamically fleeting landscape, which has always been subject to political change, I concluded that there was still room for emerging methodologies and ways to re-read and re-interpret this imagery. It is essential to note that at the primary stage (December 2018), the fieldwork focused exclusively on Athens’s city centre. Given that it is the commercial area of the city, it has been mostly affected by the crisis and is the place that gathers the most media and academic interest.

At this point, the collected data could indeed prove the public’s constant engagement through layering, although it was limited due to the finite number of projects. Yet, the idea of perceiving and finally engaging with a skin (derma), covering the city surface and not merely the walls, has already been there since the beginning of the research. To be precise, in December 2018, only one public wall was recorded (Chapter 6: 6.7). All the other scanning processes embraced various city volumes; for instance, a closed kiosk (Appendix 1) and two post-boxes (Appendix 1; Chapter 6: 6.7). This germinal decision indicates an unwitting distinction from scholars and researchers seeking the walls for slogans or graffiti, clearly identifying their representatively expressed political connotations. Hence, I was

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unconsciously seeking the political and contested meaning of engaging with the city in non-representational or artistic (e.g., street art) acts taking place on any city surface apart from the walls.

Chapter 3 The urban landscape and the city of Athens

3.1 Understanding and preserving the diachronic and ephemeral urban ‘fragments’

An attempt to record and examine the Athenian cityscape and its imagery during the economic crisis may provide evidence for investigating the relationship between the contemporary times of the city and its past and potential future. However, as it is uncertain whether the crisis in Greece has ended or will be shifted into a new one due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a discourse on how the urban imaginary may provide historic evidence has not yet begun. We can thus examine recent examples of projects elsewhere that have attempted to connect current urban inscriptions to broader historic content. In 2017, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) embarked on investigating the identification and recording of historic and recent graffiti art. The aim was to successfully archive evidence of graffiti and ‘consider it as an aspect of Scotland’s historic environment’ (p. 4). Finlayson and Dennis (2002) point out that analysing the semantics attached to each manifestation within a landscape may offer modern societies a better understanding of the past and the archaeological heritage of different times (p. 219). An investigation of the current Athenian urban sphere would hence contribute to charting the succession and continuity of the city by ‘reading’ its particular landscape. As far as graffiti is concerned, whether it is considered ‘contentious’ (sprayed on walls) or established as a pivotal proof of the historic environment (e.g., the Viking runes in Maes Howe passage grave, Orkney), it can essentially assist us in an ‘understanding of heritage significance and authenticity’ and in identifying new perspectives of the historic landscape (Historic Environment Scotland, 2017, p. 4).

The word *landscape* is used as a term in many and diverse disciplines. For instance, in cultural geography, the ‘landscape is understood as the vehicle of vested interests and regimes of power, and... the task of the critical cultural geographer is to interrogate such regimes’ (Wylie, 2007, p. 6). In addition, it is examined in disciplines such as archaeology and cultural heritage management (Finlayson, Dennis, 2002, p. 219), interpretative archaeology, cultural anthropology (Wylie, 2007, p. 6), architecture, history, philosophy, etc. As far as the study of the urban landscape within Greek society is concerned, in 2010 (nearly at the beginning of the crisis), a group of anthropologists, historians, geographers, and architects contributed a spatial approach to the social fabric and civilisation to the book *Contested Spaces in the City: Spatial Approaches to Culture*. One of their main subjects was

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how the relationship between power and resistance is formulated through social space and, vice versa, how spatiality is shaped through the power and resistance correlation (Giannakopoulos, Giannitsiotis, 2010, p. 11). Throughout the present thesis, by examining the spatial dimension of this dipole (power-resistance) and the crisis's impact on Greek society, reciprocal exchange and intersection will emerge. Specifically, I refer to how the individuals visually affected and claimed the cityscape, and how it relentlessly reflected their echo and identity in turn. Thus, a 'mapping' of the landscape can be considered to be how the official authorities address the Athenian cityscape and change it (or just abandon it) in the name of power or authority (given by the people). Whereas a 'demapping' might be how the notion of the contested space [dipole power-resistance] formulates reality, reactions, and responses to the authorities within a landscape apparently fixed, stable, and mapped. Demapping denotes the fleeting reality of the cityscape, always under the historical and political developments of the crisis.

As Bender (2006) states, what we call *landscapes* are formed when people engage with their environment and the world around them (p. 303). Landscapes are always being changed, being present at this moment but also in a process of dynamic change, and thus are always temporal (Bender, 2002, p. 103). According to Richard Schein (1997), 'landscapes are always in the process of "becoming", no longer reified, or concretized—inert and there—but continually under scrutiny, at once manipulable and manipulated, always subject to change, and everywhere implicated in the ongoing formulation of social life' (p. 662). This ephemeral dynamic raises a twofold enquiry apropos of my research: how the socio-political conditions in Athens affected the public's engagement with the urban space in a temporal and rapidly evolving way, and how this locus in constant flux can be preserved and documented.

One prominent approach to the Athenian cityscape is the post-empiricist stance (Schein, 2003), based on the work of J.B. Jackson, which examines landscapes 'as capable of providing for social change' (p. 202-203). In these terms, a cultural landscape is both a material and a notional space, and its role in mediating social and cultural change reflects its dynamic ability to advocate 'norms, values, fears, and so on' (2003, p. 202-203). Looking behind the visually perceived imagery of Athens, a conceptual dimension mirrors the present necessities and demands of the Greek people towards any austerity imposed during the years of the crisis. Nonetheless, this dual nature of the landscape as both material and an 'intercessor' for mirroring cultural values embeds the idea of the politics of memory (Wylie, 2007, p. 191). Hence, the recording of the conditions and alterations of the Athens cityscape

is not only essential as an *ad interim* political element; it can also function as a trace of memory for the future researcher. Thus, my research, except for an engagement in visual developments (formed recording methodology, produced images in virtual and physical space, etc.), can function as a supplementary or future supporting proof towards understanding the crisis and its relevant iconography.

Two categories of elements are gathered in my research as a contribution to this memory quest. On the one hand, the representative ones, such as verbal or pictorial signs (slogans, stencilled images, graffiti); on the other, the ruins of the crisis (traces of abandonment, derelict closed stores visually appropriated, etc.). Memory is central to contemporary landscape research, and the landscape is, in its turn, ‘a concretization and maker of memory’ (Mitchell, 2003, p. 790). In the case of Athens, the landscape and traces of memory may function as evidence of history’s development. The ruins of desertion, as ‘in-between spaces’, may also function ‘as time capsules: a kind of accidental, historic cache of material culture’ (Kindynis, 2019, p. 27). The ruins of prior realities may provide a cartography of the crisis, ‘an ethnographic excavation of the material traces’ (Kindynis, 2019, p. 27), as they are reflected and seen on the urban surfaces of the city. Furthermore, this approach could be considered “ghost ethnography”, an emergent methodological orientation that emphasises the absence, and the interpretation of material and atmospheric traces’ (Kindynis, 2019, p. 25)

In terms of historicity, HES (2017) acknowledges graffiti as ‘an important indicator of the historic environment’ that pays witness to ‘the material culture of the past’ (p. 5). Therefore, by formulating a methodology that preserves, interprets, reads, and even further develops the Athenian urban trace of the crisis, we may substantiate the ephemeral trace of the crisis in a memory database for future investigations of the current period. As I mentioned before, although the debate connecting the crisis’ urban traces with Greece’s historical evolution has not started yet, my periodical recordings and outcomes may be deposited in a future national archive and contribute to further understanding of Greece’s current period.

Historical accounts of the city have endured in time as a means of validating and valorising cultural heritage cities, and indeed, cities themselves. This is evidenced through artefacts and other primary data that substantiate the historical significance of the landscape, the literature of each era, paintings, and sculptures. In ancient Egypt, for instance, painting’s and sculpture’s origins were firmly connected to the mummy value as ‘a defence against the passage of time’, the victory of time and death as a man’s need (Bazin, 1960, p. 4). As André

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Bazin (1960) suggests, the terra cotta statuettes, as substitute mummies, would take the place of the physical body when it was destroyed; thus, the statue was the medium of ‘the preservation of life by a representation of life’ (p. 5). As Walter Benjamin states (1969), what we later came to recognise as a ‘work of art’, in prehistoric times had ‘a cult value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic’ (p. 53). Yet could we recognise a magical quality, a dynamic of exorcising embedded into the ‘urban aphorism’ of crisis, e.g., graffiti and slogans? The maker of traces in the caverns during prehistoric times is still unknown to us, as are most of the actors who inscribe their messages in the skin of Athens. Whittington (1978) referred to this hiding in anonymity through which the writer ‘unmasks aggression, frustration, forbidden humour, or other repressed feelings in a forum where a captive audience cannot avoid either symbol or substance. What we cannot avoid, we would do well to understand’ (p. 225). Do we notice these political traces, always updated at the time of history’s unfolding? Do we document them, salvaging them from oblivion and immediate extinction?

The phenomenon of the existence of traces within the cityscapes indeed implies mortality, thereby creating a fleeting landscape. It is at the same time paradoxical: the organic version of them as they were in the specific space and time they were born (their ‘natural’ habitat, the buildings surrounding them, as well as the contemporary societal norms and the observing subjective eyes) is rapidly gone, dead. Notwithstanding, the organic and dynamic essence of a space is firmly connected with the processes that occur within it (Marinic, 2018, n.p.), while the spatial dynamics stress how a space is produced through the material practices that result in various social relations (Massey, 2005, n.p.). In the case of Athens and its dynamic evolution, referring to the preservation of the ephemeral trace of its cityscape, what would be the contemporary equivalent of the Egyptian ‘representations of life to preserve life’ (Bazin, 1960, p. 5)? My research seeks both the methodology of the specific preservation and the unveiling of the visual ‘substitutes’ that will represent Athens in crisis. Given that each trace (derived from a specific period of the crisis) cannot be recalled, detected, or charted, I will focus on examining and unveiling ‘the bigger picture’, the urban imagery of Athens as a skin.

According to Khirfan (2010), Athens, much like Alexandria, Rome, and other cities that used to be cultural and academic centres of antiquity, are places where ancient heritage and urban forms interact. The city of Athens, Khirfan argues, has layers that include fragments or traces of heritage from many different areas and urban form, the tangible. Moreover, it also has a distinctive character and spirit of place for each part of it, or even from street to

street, neighbourhood to neighbourhood, namely the intangible (p. 315). Khirfan (2010) compares the urban environment with the palimpsest, which is the canvas that can be reused, erased, or built upon as different eras overtake the previous and leave their own fragment or trace. Both tangible and intangible forms of heritage and the fragments they leave behind have value as they both, in the end, form the cityscape (p. 315). As Crang (1996) points out, 'each era is overtaken by the next; it leaves traces and redundancies, obsolescence and irrationalities—things that remain as a mark: the burden of the past or an inheritance' (p. 430). In Athens, the last chronological layer of this palimpsest can be considered to be that of the crisis; one visually noticeable consequence of it was the closure of numerous stores in the commercial city centres of the Greek cities. Indeed, entire commercial streets evoked desolate urban spaces similar to images of war or post-war dystopias. A 'silent war' during which the heart of the city's life was led to extinction.

A response to this silence has been the numerous slogans and graffiti that have acted as alternative mediums to express 'dissatisfaction, protest, and often readiness for social change' (Zaimakis, 2016, p. 66). Numerous posters gradually conquered the facades of the closed stores as well. The glass of shop windows, obstructed with blocks of wood or sheet metal, became a 'noticeboard' and a 'canvas' for multiple and various activities: political messages written with spray-paint and stencils, tagging, political graffiti, posters announcing public open discussions, demonstrations, or proclamations. The interior part of a store, once full of commodities and products, serving the idea of the Debordian 'spectacle' (The Society of the Spectacle, [1967] 2014), was then empty as though nothing ever happened in there. This emptiness represented the ruins of the spectacle and laid bare the evidence of examining the 'era of anti-spectacle', as I refer to the period of crisis in my research.

A contradictory image and example of this palimpsest may be the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, situated in the city centre, surrounded by an area filled with the above-mentioned elements. Zaimakis (2015a) refers to this palimpsest as 'the city's cultural palimpsest' (p. 119), which is politicised with the use of graffiti writing, encoded forms of protest through a 'subversive aesthetic aura [...], an ongoing struggle against austerity policies' (Zaimakis, 2016, p. 66). This is an indicative case to reflect upon how two faces of history are present and co-exist at the same time. On the one hand, the ancient Greek, the foundation on which the Western World was built, shown in a neoclassical protected temple (the museum), which stands as a fortress in the middle of the new, the contemporary. Stone and marble fragments preserve the language of the past, traces of the words of the ancient inhabitants of this place. On the other hand, the new is the surrounding current city with its

monstrous concrete apartment blocks and their walls that function as cement fragments to inscribe the contemporary language and the necessity of present expression.

3.2 Athens: a palimpsest of contradictions

In the city of Athens, only ten minutes away from historical monuments such as the Parthenon, are territories that are considered high-class (Kolonaki), at the base of Lykabettus Hill. Kolonaki is where parts of the elite live and has an open view of the Acropolis (Barrett, 2019). On the other hand, only a few minutes' walk from Kolonaki, one can find the neighbourhood of Exarhia, an area of bohemian spirit and alternative culture that is covered in political street art, anti-racist posters, and graffiti. Tsilimpounidi (2015, p. 28), in an interview with the street art group *Political Zoo*, mentions that the group fears Exarhia is turning into a small 'Gallic village'. This reference is derived from the French comic series *The Adventures of Asterix*, in which a little Gallic village is the only one that still opposes the Roman Empire's forces. The group's goal, as the author mentions, is to spread their practice into different parts of the city, for fear that Exarhia will become a secluded place and be considered an exception to the rule, a minority. In her study, Tsilimpounidi (2015) states that the inhabitants of the area view their covered walls and street art in general as part of the neighbourhood's culture and consider the 'defaced' city's skin as a form of demonstration, an attempt to awaken social consciousness (p. 19). My engagement in recording and examining these city centre areas during my periodical fieldworks illustrates the above-mentioned *Political Zoo*'s intention, namely, to spread their practice throughout the city. This wider investigation serves to identify the broader phenomenon of the 'skin' of the crisis, rather than be bounded by merely examining the graffiti or slogans of the city centre.

Apart from using linguistic symbols, a variety of visual cues can be found on the city walls, for example, in street art productions. Andron (2016, p. 71) speaks of the improving aesthetics that street art and graffiti have grown into, making use of the existing visual and material contexts, and changing their appearance. These visual and material contexts may include any visual or linguistic fragment that takes part in the grand puzzle of the cityscape. Andron (2016) argues that street art and graffiti should be considered localised culture and inscriptive artefacts, with their codes and history (p. 71). In this way, the case of Athens during the crisis can provide visual echoes of the socio-political conditions imposed on

people who react through their public writing. The documentation of these ‘proofs’ can be a body of evidence to redirect any officially written history of the crisis through mass media or any of the sovereignty’s mediums to formulate or manipulate history.

3.3 What affects the dynamic properties of the ever-changing Athenian ‘skin’ and the urban fragments

To understand what has affected the urban landscape of Athens, I will proceed to a short and succinct review of the past. In the last couple of centuries, the architectural landscape of the city of Athens has changed drastically. Khirfan (2010) argues that the Athenian landscape suffered greatly during the Ottoman rule, as the population was severely reduced due to the decentralisation forced by the high taxation of Christians by the Ottomans and the prohibition of land ownership (p. 319). At the beginning of the 19th century and with the independence from Ottoman rule (1832), European influence started taking effect; the role of the donors was important as they ‘resided in the four corners of the earth’ (Bastea, 2000, p. 151). Athens’ classical heritage sites were reinstated, and the city was transformed into a source of European and Greek pride; this metamorphosis is due to the considerable role of the architects in reformulating the city (Bastea, 2000, pp. 217-223). A new street network was designed with consideration for the archaeological sites, and many of the city’s buildings were built in the Neoclassical style, thus bridging the old and the new (Tung, 2001, p. 263). The developing urban landscape and the economic growth were followed by a growing rise in population, which, after World War II and the Greek civil war that followed, led to maladministration and corruption as far as property building was concerned. Moreover, several of the Neoclassical buildings were brought down to be replaced by taller buildings to accommodate the rising population (Tung, 2001, n.p.). This city seemed completely different from that one century ago: ‘On first arrival, a stranger would hardly believe that this is the Athens of which he has heard so much’ (Tung, 2001, p. 248). At the beginning of the 21st century, Athens was heatedly preparing for the 2004 Olympic Games, which spurred a need to redesign many of the destroyed or deserted areas, the design’s inspiration coming from the Greek Olympic heritage (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004, p. 192). Moreover, the new Acropolis Museum opened its doors in 2009, preserving and showcasing fragments of the ancient heritage. The role of the Olympic Games and the investment in antiquity will be further discussed in Chapter 5, ‘De-Mapping the map of Athens in crisis’.

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The re-designing and re-building of parts of the city didn't leave it without a mark. Rodokanakis (2012) studied the economic years after the Olympic Games of 2004 and before the global crisis (2007-) in Greece. He found that the year before the global crisis began, Greece already had the highest unemployment rate in both the EU and Eurozone (p. 1).

In an attempt to investigate the exponential appearance of urban fragments in Athens, like street art and graffiti in the Athenian cityscape, Tsilimpounidi (2015, p. 18) investigated the visual interface of the city and the changing circumstances after 2008, when the internal and global crises were already taking a great toll on the people's lives. The created outcomes, such as graffiti and paintings, stencils, tags, and poster collages, started appearing more and more in the city centre, changing the city's aesthetics and spreading messages about or against political power struggles, marginalised groups, and racism (anti-racist visual manifestos). Visual and linguistic markings on the walls of the city began as a more expanded phenomenon around that time, firstly as markings of gangs in poorer neighbourhoods of Athens, declaring their territory as writings, graffiti, and other types of marking (Tsilimpounidi, Walsh, 2011, p. 112). These 'talking walls' captured the spirit of discontent and a need for expression in a city boiling inward. Tsilimpounidi (2015) also examined street art as a barometer of the effects of the crisis and used photography to capture the present-moment feeling at the time it was taken (pp. 19-20). Yet, as she admits, the task of documentation and analysis was made hard by the fact that new layers emerged continuously, covering even 'old favourites' (2015, p. 19). What she suggests as a way to solve this problem is to meet with the street art groups, make contacts, and engage in creative dialogue to become able to understand the maker's needs behind the act. This brings back the idea of the palimpsest, a skin of 'captured "moments", helping to locate experience through visual means' (2015, p. 20). It is an issue of understanding urban landscapes in a phenomenological sense (Tilley, 2008, p. 271). One more important point Tsilimpounidi and Walsh (2011, p. 112) raise is that there is a difference between the street art groups of the 21st century and those that practised it decades before. Even though in the past the practice of wall layering, and landscape changing was part of gang practices, organised groups of the 21st century consist mostly of university-educated middle-class 25-35-year-olds (Tsilimpounidi, 2015, p. 20). For them, the walls are a place of dialogue and deconstruction of political structures, corruption, marginalisation, and racist propaganda. Their work becomes one with the previous layers on the walls, whatever they may be, and reveals even a larger story. From that point forward, the enquiry into 'the skin of the crisis' starts to be more pivotal, and its rapid and ever-changing condition requires further investigation. The

methodology engaged in my PhD will further identify this theme bringing to light propositions of how to handle this ‘skin’, documentation, and potential utilisation through fine art practice and within its field in turn.

Chiotis (2015, p. 153-154) looks at the evolution of walls and street art from the moment the global economic crisis began, with Greece being as greatly affected as other countries in the world. Apart from a declaration of resistance, these intentional or unintentional productions also bring out the sizzling tension by desecrating public buildings and monuments. Chiotis continues by saying that deliberate wall marking in the form of street art should be valued as a sign of a struggling urban community against corruption, mishandling of public affairs, and stagnated politics. But even the fact that the walls are not being cleaned up regularly from the debris of layers upon layers shows not only the growing unrest or street art culture but also the state’s inability to handle the situation. These forms of defacement of property are considered illegal in Greece (Article 381 of the Greek Penal Code prohibits damage to foreign property). Posters advertising little shops’ discounts, festivals, and seminars promising a better chance of finding work add to the Athenian cityscape and become vital parts of the produced outcome and the subjective interpretation behind it.

In 2008, the centre of Athens became a socio-political warzone. Stavrides (2017, p. 164) writes that the rising urban demands for affordable housing, better transportation, and job opportunities were followed by an important incident that took place in Exarhia, the alternative culture neighbourhood in the centre of Athens. On the 6th of December 2008, a 15-year-old high school student was murdered in cold blood by a police officer who ‘felt insulted by the boy’s attitude’ (Stavrides, 2017, p. 164). The response from an immense part of the population was unprecedented. Public buildings and schools were occupied by students and citizens on strikes or during big demonstrations all over the country. In the centre of Athens, Stavrides writes (2017, p. 165-166), groups of youngsters, immigrants, and jobless people were united with more organised groups of workers’ unions and other professionals to protest against the state and ‘reclaim the city’. The murder of a schoolboy spurred a protest that epitomised the discontent of a people hurt by corrupt policies and their rebellion against a state that was not able to protect its citizens. Normally peaceful people occupied the streets and public buildings around Parliament and Syntagma Square. Hooded ballerinas danced a rebellious dance in front of the occupied National Opera building. The urban landscape was occupied by a collective uproar, which was also transferred onto the walls of the urban landscape. The stencils of the photograph of the murdered boy and other types of anti-state markings on the city’s walls were shown by the media or photographed

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and put on virtual ‘walls’ (Facebook, Twitter). Individual and collective unrest were expressed in ephemeral acts of public space appropriation more dynamically. As Stavrides (2017) states, the cityscape was used as a stage for an uprising and, at the same time, a necessary means to spread collective values and experience (p. 166).

In this situation, we see how events (socio-political or other) can affect the dynamic properties of the urban Athenian space. Layers upon layers on walls and surfaces appropriated the clean and austere façades. Each day they are created, wittingly or unwittingly, and they are experienced and interpreted by each passer-by uniquely. A period of brooding and social unrest, followed by a singular event, changed the dynamic properties of these fragments: their growth, their livelihood as they once were, and the time range of their existence.

Chapter 4 Photography, 3D scanning and Photogrammetry: Building up the skin

4.1 Photography: Capturing the ephemeral and the photographic representation

Photography has a pivotal role in my fieldwork recordings in Athens and offers the first level of visual-based research. It suggests a specific moment of the photographed subject's transformation, capturing a transient stage of its relentless development within the Athenian urban imagery. In this chapter, I will focus on photographic material taken in Athens since 2008, including various chronological phases before embarking on doctoral research in 2018. In drawing on these images, I will provide an alternative visual narrative of the crisis through the ephemeral urban traces, emerging their role as historic evidence of Greece's actuality. I will also attempt to unfold the prominence of photography in field-based research as a methodology for recording the ephemeral, as well as its development in my practice over the above-mentioned years.

Roland Barthes (1981, p. 4) argued that a photographed item is an icon that bears only a visual resemblance to its referent. He adds that the photographed item is an indexical representation of the actual item, as it had to be present by the time the photograph was taken. This 'indexical representation' was evident at any of my periodical fieldwork sites, given that most of the selected spaces (or urban objects) were never the same; new interventions had altered the basic stable item and moulded a new image of it. That is why Barthes in *Camera Lucida* (1981) uses a different way of understanding the photograph as a visual representation: the item is called a 'photographic referent, not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers, but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph' (p. 76). For Barthes, the photographic imprint is a 'footprint', a 'trace', a 'remnant' (Olin, 2002, p. 100) of something transient in time, an ephemeral fragment of reality. Thus, the photograph only represents a specific, stagnant image of what the item once was. In the case of Athens, photography offered me access to particular moments when, for instance, a shop was open and people were looking into its showcases, then closed while gradually moving towards its total dereliction and its new claim (public interventions). Thereby, Barthes (1981) argued that the photograph is but a memorial to a now-dead fragment of reality. According to him, it cannot

capture the item as a whole (p. 99). Although this statement unveils a problematic aspect of the medium, photography in my research fitted best to demonstrate the ceaseless evolution of the city's skin, even if it was partially represented through chosen stages. André Bazin (1960) suggested that the making of images 'is no longer a question of survival after death, but a larger concept, the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real, with its temporal destiny' (p. 6). A visual rescue of the ephemeral traces of Athens as a whole, a skin, attempts to correspond to this 'larger concept', yet the ideal will be how multiple photographies can supersede the 'temporal destiny' and produce a body of visual evidence serving the real and its temporality.

In my research, multiple photographs function as 'sketches' for any further experimental development to compose and reproduce urban realities. As Walter Benjamin (1968) states, photography 'freed the hand', and the artistic act is assigned to the eye while looking into a lens. The eye corresponds quicker than the hand can draw, and photographic reproduction has so much speed that it is synchronised with speech (p. 219). Indeed, my recording methodology embeds thousands of 'clicks' to collect and archive the Athenian reality of the crisis. These clicks mainly focus on gathering the aliquot features of a subject in fast and unconsciously captured fragmented compositions (details of a whole). Thereby, a scanning process collects the individual parts that finally merge into a representation of the scanned reality at a later stage. Instead of a sole picture for preserving the urban scenery, the prominence to the detail—often invisible or unnoticed—accredits an archaeological quality to both the separate pieces and the whole. Hence, photography handles the current urban trace as an archaeological finding, such as graffiti, which can be perceived both as an archaeological discovery and a stand-alone significant historic artefact (Giles, Giles, 2010; Lovata, Olton, 2015; Merrill, 2015). As far as photography as a methodological recording tool is concerned, Hale and Anderson (2020) sought to challenge the 'contentious' reception of graffiti as an aspect of the historic environment through 'unsettling traditional approaches to the use of photography in archaeological recording' (p. 151). The exploration I discuss in my thesis, related to the urban ephemeral trace, could develop new perspectives in archaeological photography as well.

4.1.1 2008 – Grigoropoulos’s murder – the beginning of the crisis

As mentioned before, in December 2008, following a few years of growing public unrest, an incident happened that instigated a range of unified public demonstrations and protests. At the time, a police officer shot and murdered a 15-year-old schoolboy, Alexis Grigoropoulos, close to Athens’s city centre, in Exarchia district. This event was ‘the stronghold of the anti-systemic movement, and triggered the most severe social unrest that the country has faced in its post-dictatorial era’ (Avramidis, 2015, p. 531). Exarchia district is a ‘politicised neighbourhood’ that has hosted a great deal of graffiti and street art exclusively focused on politics and protest: ‘political slogans, memorials to fighters killed in the struggle, depictions of protest, and portraits of protesters’ (Tulke, 2017, p. 214).



Figure 9 Google Maps, ‘15 years old’, August 2014. Screenshot. Zaimi & Korinthou corner, 26221, Patras. ©2019 Google.

For many years after 2008, the resilience of the symbol of the murdered teenager, through visual forms within the public space (fig. 9-10), demonstrated the importance of this incident for the massive protests at the beginning of Greece’s crisis and during it. Indeed, the 6th of December 2008 marks a ‘rather symbolic date for contemporary Greek history, as it is considered to be the beginning of the current crisis’ (Avramidis, 2015, p. 531).

Written symbols relevant to Alexis Grigoropoulos’s death have been reproduced in Greek cities for many years after the incident (fig. 9-11). The slogan ‘15 years [old]’ (fig. 10) was detected in the third biggest city of Greece, Patras, via Google Maps, while Google’s images

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were captured in August 2014. We are unaware of when exactly the message was written or how long it remained on the wall after the capture. We only know that six years after the pupil's murder, people still needed to commemorate his loss through annual demonstrations and tracing his name, his age, and his face on the walls. Below the blue street sign (fig. 9) we discern a vertically marked word where the end is missing, yet it is still legible: «EKΔΙKH [ΣH]», namely 'REVENG[E]'. It is not certain if the word was written for the pupil or the crisis; however, it bears witness to the contestability of the public space.



Figure 10 Google Maps, Close-up: '15 years old'. Screenshot. ©2019 Google.

Stencil slogans such as 'These days belong to Alexis' (fig. 11) stress the mere use of the name of the boy, 'Alexis', like being the child of the people. Bearing in mind that this slogan was captured on December 28, 2019—11 years after his murder—these inscriptions show how the commemoration of his death passes through the urban walls and firmly connects the loss of a boy to the protests.



Figure 11 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'These days belong to Alexis', 2019. Photography. Near Korinthou & Patreos str., 26221, Patras. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

In December 2008, this incident spurred a movement of protests throughout the whole country, in which most of the country's population took part: professionals, trade unions, high schoolers, immigrants, and others. The protests embodied the discontent of normally peaceful citizens who, after years of steadily rising austerity, could not feel secure in their own country anymore (Stavrides, 2017, p. 165). It was then that the public space began to be occupied increasingly by a type of visual language that was blending into the urban

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landscape and covering it, e.g., stencils of the murdered boy's face, anti-racist and anti-government portrayals using written and visual language. The walls of the city became a canvas, 'forming a living archive of the current historical conjuncture' (Tulke, 2019, p. 167). The embedded socio-political context had 'the potential to actively transform urban space and reimagine everyday life by inscribing alternative histories and possibilities into the very surface of the city' (Tulke, 2017, pp. 203-204).

4.1.2 2008: The beginning of recording the traces of the forthcoming crisis

In December 2008, as a student, I took part in the numerous demonstrations organised in memory of Alexis Grigoropoulos's murder. During the demonstrations, and mostly after them, I was wandering around Athens and taking pictures of the slogans written in the aftermath of the protests using a simple digital camera. That was my first link to the urban city and its documentation. Stavros Stavrides in *The December 2008 uprising's stencil images in Athens – Writing or inventing traces of the future?* (2017) argues that the December 2008 stencil images that appeared on the walls of Athens were replicated and distributed through social media and were not only used to spread the uprising's messages. They also functioned as 'stencil-acts', 'calls to struggle and forms of struggle' (2017, p. 166). These traces were the invented medium of an uprising that was coming. The importance of Stavrides's statement lies in the fact that these ephemeral messages were not only recorded by numerous people but also spread on social media.

This public tendency had a potential impact on me as well, so I proceeded to document and distribute my images as an alternative form of positioning myself parallel to my physical participation in protests. The significance of these primordial forms of resistance—as 'acts' and invitations to struggle and, simultaneously, symbols of struggle—may underline the substance of their consecutive forms, namely the visual outcomes of the activity on the closed stores during the crisis immediately after. My role as a student-protestor and the initial recording can now be seen as a sign of my future research engagement, and the digital camera as the predecessor of my mobile camera fully in charge years later when mobile cameras started being available.

What could be the role of these 2008 political traces if they were to be recorded? Would they be a visual medium of the events and have to be preserved for the collective memory? Would they be indicatively deliberating ideas linked to the motivations of the 2008 uprising or signs

Photography, 3D scanning and Photogrammetry: Building up the skin owed to anonymous actors in support of the uprising? Were they political emblems implying activist groups or political views (Stavrides, 2017, p. 166)?

At that time, I was not aware of how (or if) this material would be helpful or used at a later stage. However, I somehow believed that this body of slogan writing could contribute to a future examination of the socio-political history of Athens and stress how the city reflected its evolution on its walls. In *X-APXEIA UNCENSORED – The Slogans and Graffiti of Exarchia 2009-2012* Takis Spyropoulos (2013) argues that writing on a wall is not a revolutionary act; what is important is the fact that so many citizens seek ways ‘to express themselves in every possible way’ (p. 12). Yet, in my opinion, this is in fact revolutionary. While encountering a crisis, people who have no other way to be heard echo their narratives on the walls, anticipating that others would listen to them. Let us remember Baudrillard’s (1981) earlier remark in May ’68, where the walls of Paris and the discourses they hosted were the ‘real revolutionary media’ (p. 176). What did people seek on the street at that time? Merrin (1999) considers this exchange to be symbolic ‘immediate, ephemeral, transformative, dualistic, endlessly reversible, and agonistic’ (p. 131). Even if none would physically respond to a message against the crisis, many people said, ‘This could have been written by me’ in front of a slogan, or others posted images of them on their social media, responding to them by approving them. Through the public walls, people were narrating their own stories, reflecting Greece’s history the very moment it happened before any history—potentially manipulated—will be written by the official authorities at a later stage.

In the interview *Urban Culture: 24 Graffiti of Exarchia* (Parides, 2013), Spyropoulos referred to a slogan saying, ‘Sorry for writing the urban walls, but I am not invited to talk shows’. As Spyropoulos mentioned, this act of wall writing was mostly related to young people and their need to be expressed through the public space, as they were feeling the oppression of the city and the socio-political conditions that we have been experiencing over the last years (Spyropoulos, 2013b). Besides, this slogan may have more interpretations. The public walls might be the means for those who have no other vehicle to speak up about what the militarised media would never say. For those who are ‘not invited to talk shows’, and who do not participate in the media spectacle, talk shows and reality shows are commodities. Zaimakis (2015a) stresses that the emergence of graffiti in periods of crisis is a meaningful social practice that politicizes and aestheticizes the public space by setting up a public forum (p. 120). Those citizens and collectives who have no other (official) media to state their presence, demonstrate their thoughts and ideas about the social world and express feelings and existential anxieties on the walls of the city (2015a, p. 120).

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Let us see below in a visual form what these initial late 2008/early 2009 slogans expressed (fig. 12-20). What necessities they brought to light, and if they could constitute a body of evidence for historic interpretations of the primary period of the crisis. At that stage, I had not detected or recorded what I would call 'skin' later. The cityscape was not saturated then, yet I located activity beyond the public walls or steel panels (fig. 16), such as the pavement (fig. 15) and recycling bins (fig. 17). Most of the slogans were written in Greek; for this reason, a translation in English is included in each figure below (12-20).

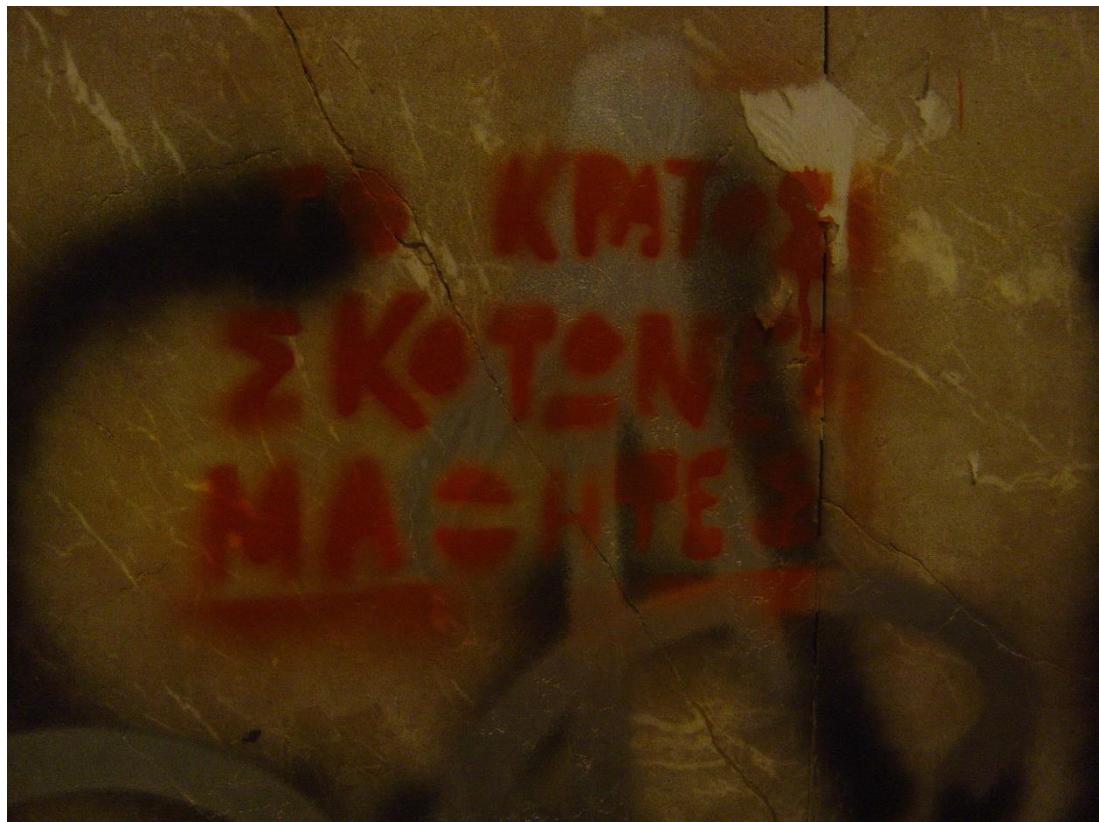


Figure 12 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'The state kills students', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

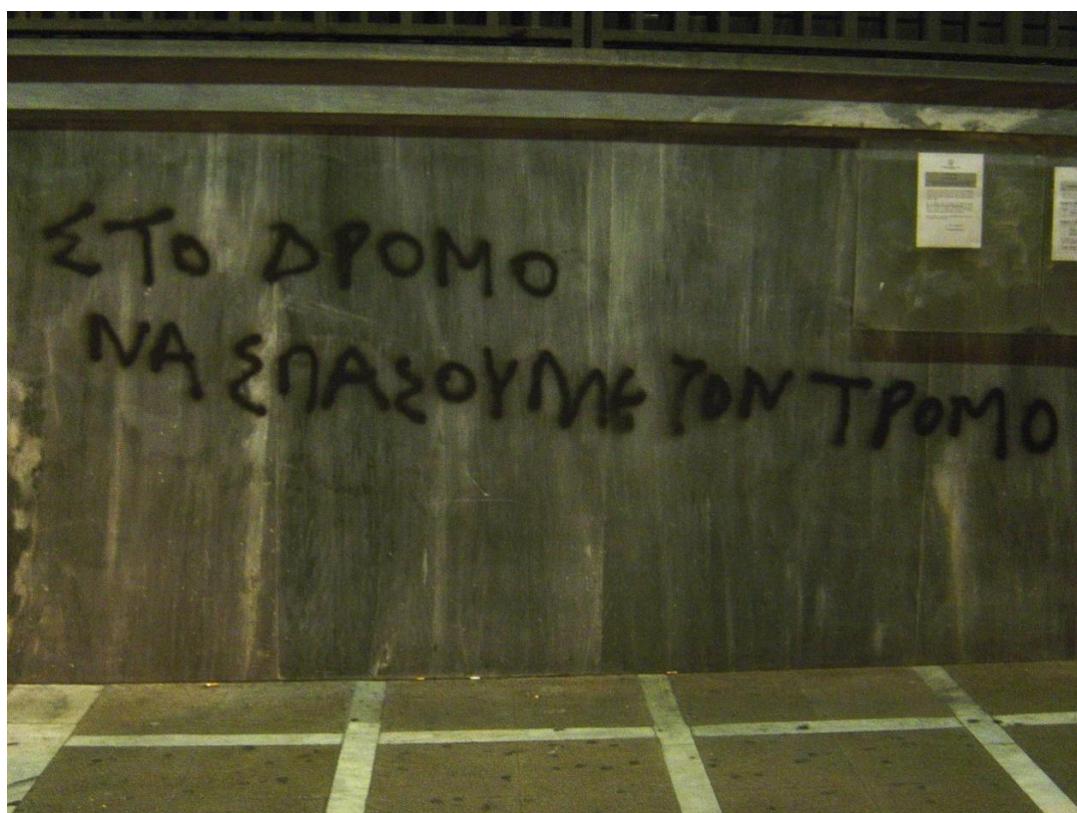


Figure 13 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'On the street, to break the fear', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

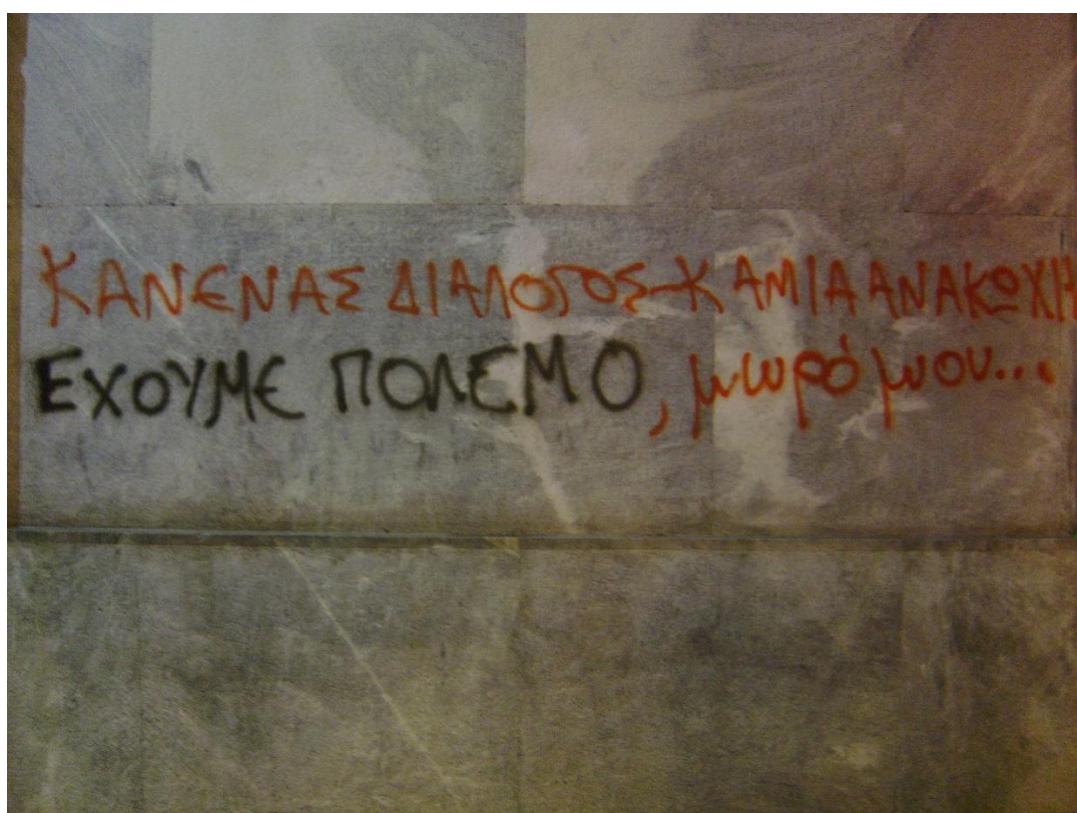


Figure 14 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'No dialogue, no cease-fear. We have a war, baby', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Figure 15 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'No control', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 16 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'A burnt bank is a flower in blossom', January 2009. Photography.

Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 17 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Class hatred', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

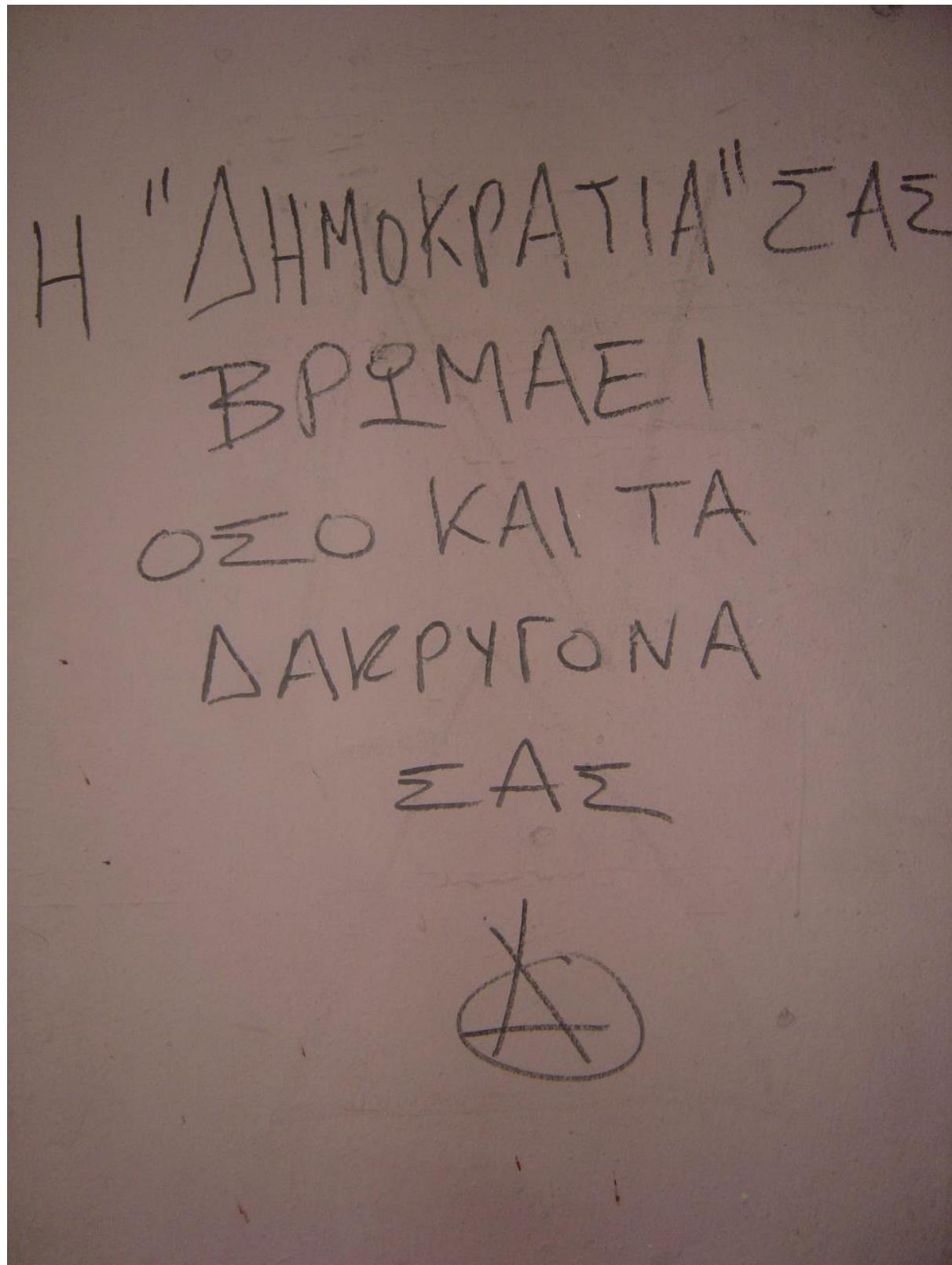


Figure 18 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Your "democracy" stinks like your tear gas', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

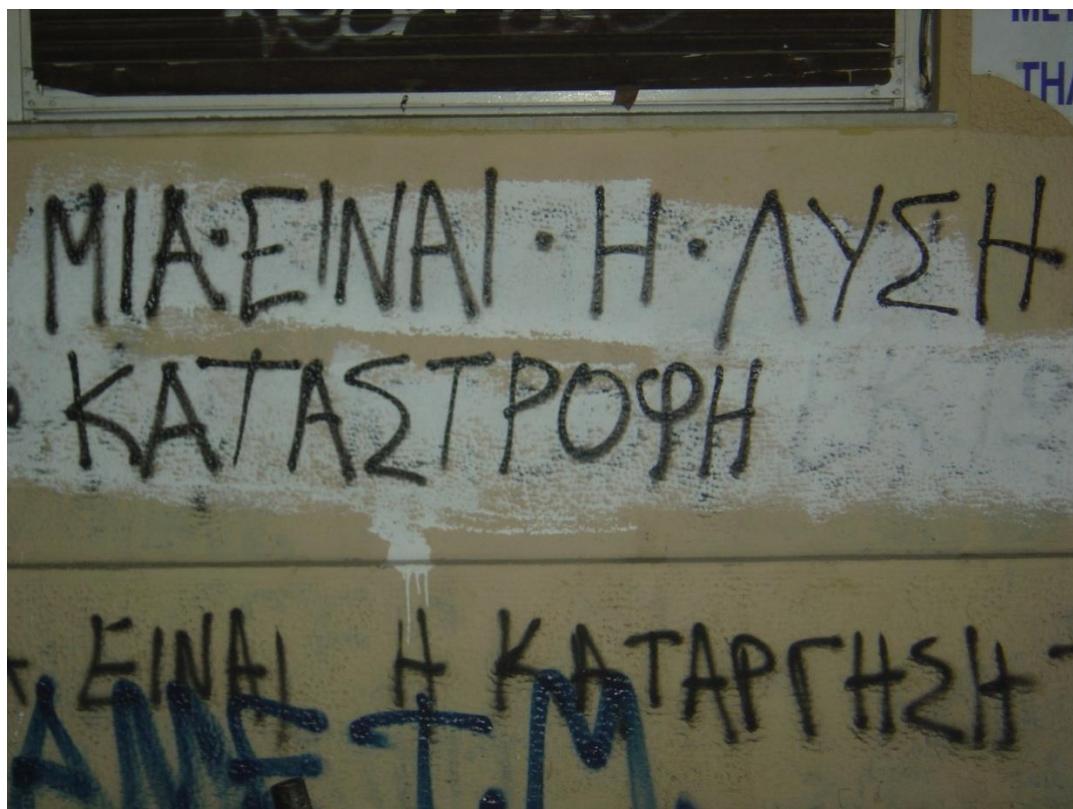


Figure 19 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'There's only one solution: destruction', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 20 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'All or Nothing', January 2009. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

The slogans of the early-crisis period (2009) finally reflected the many faces of the forthcoming crisis that followed in the next few years. They showcased the role of the police in the following years' demonstrations, the reference to the 'street' as the field of demanding people's rights, the 'democracy' that was imposed through tear gas, the banks and their role, the media in favour of the governments' austerity measures, impoverishment, and class discrimination, etc. Those were some of the messages that were already spread before and at the beginning of the crisis. They functioned, therefore, as omens of what came after, as being 'present in any turbulent historic period, conveying a message of an event to be read just before or after it occurs' (Kalofolios, 2013, p. 5). Peponis (2008), in his book *The Walls Belong to the Crowd*, features slogans captured for decades, until the publication of his book in the summer of 2008. This is important to mention, provided that the book gathers a substantial visual body of evidence of the Athenian cityscape until some months before we officially started to refer to an [Greek] 'economic crisis'. My prior reference to the murder of the 15-year-old pupil, Alexandros Grigopoulos by a policeman addresses the date of his death (6 December 2008) as a highly symbolic date for contemporary Greek history, as it is believed to mark the outset of the economic crisis (Avramidis, 2015, p. 531). Thereby, Peponis's study (2008) reflects a wide variety of the conditions of the pre-crisis period. Any slogan he collected and displayed emits its message and has its own history. Their meaning varies and can be political, social, personal, emotional, or a message of contestation and overthrow. Even a single written word has its meaning (2008, p. 9). At this historic point, the author's words that 'anyone could be a slogan writer at some point of their life' and that 'the walls are the means of communication of the excluded' (2008, p. 9) could function as a 'prophecy' of the cityscape's transformable imagery during the crisis.

Indeed, throughout the book, we rarely notice overwhelmed walls or surfaces in writing or other visual activity. There is not. When this was detected, highlighted, and pointed out as a 'boom' in 2011, shifting a stable cityscape into a forum open to debate and dialogue (Tsilimpounidi, Walsh, 2011, p. 111), we were already counting some years of the crisis's reality. We now understand Peponis's statement clearly: within a saturated landscape for years, more and more actors became 'writers at some point in their life', and more and more people were 'excluded' (2008, p. 9), seeking alternative means to be heard.

4.1.3 2011-12: Getting deeper into the crisis: A shift from the slogans to wider areas and new recordings

The financial domino effect of the economic crisis caused several chain reactions due to the linkage between economy, the market, and society. For example, the average annual income in 2008—at the beginning of the crisis—was €28,418, before salaries started to drop as a consequence of the crisis. In the year 2017, the lowest average annual income could be observed, which was €7,956. Considering the above, one can speak of ‘impoverishment’ of the population of the country (Sakellari, 2019). This impoverishment that affected consumerism’s ability led to the economic domino finally influencing the whole of Greek society. The crisis has had significant costs in terms of product, income, and wealth. From 2008 to 2016, Greece lost more than 1/4 of its GDP at constant prices, while the unemployment rate increased by about 16 percentage points (Stournaras, 2020).

Going beyond financial information and data, let us consider our access to images or virtual wandering in a digitalised environment of crisis instead of merely reading a narration of it. The visual evidence would offer us the potential to proceed with our own interpretations. For example, a noticeable consequence of the crisis was the closure of numerous stores in the commercial city centres of the Greek cities, establishing an image of general abandonment. According to the records of the European Commission, from the 858,685 businesses counted in 2008, they dropped to 613,973 at the end of 2015. As a result, 842,670 jobs were lost and 30.31 billion euros of products were removed (Bellos, 2016). Indeed, all this sounds devastating, but the visual experience of massive closures within the cityscape has had a noticeable impact on people and their everyday lives. Athens, as the biggest Greek city and the metropolis with a population of 6 million and counting, was first affected, and the signs of dereliction were immediately visible.

Gradually, and in particular, in 2011, 2012, and onward, my recordings became more intensive and shifted from the slogans to larger frames, those of the closed stores. It was then that I started a more decisive wandering within the city, painstakingly observing and photographing any new alteration on the urban surfaces and the emerging narratives. Karathanasis (2010) describes this dynamic, stressing that the urban space undergoes a relentless transformation over time as a result of the various experiences and actions of the individuals who have been involved with it (p. 316). My primary documentation was therefore a visual imprint of how the individuals were responding to the new Athenian

reality. Besides, the space is never stable and homogeneous, but constantly changing, alive, and polyphonic and it reflects the action of subjects as they are at the same time reflected in it (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 316). This reminds us of Tilley's (2008) viewpoint in an attempt to understand a landscape: the experience always passes through the 'sensing and sensed body' (p. 271). People did not only experience the crisis by encountering the upsurge of the closed stores but also interacted with (on) them. They somehow attributed a 'soul' to Athens in crisis and its derelict spaces, and the city reflected on their identity, struggle, and soul.

These marks made in public places called the *defacing of monuments*, actually put a 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's masterpieces of engineering form and architectural inspiration would not be despoiled by the presence of images that reflect the 'soul' through the hand.

(Hillman, [1989] 2008, p. 105)

What does the soul of Athens in crisis require? The soul desires its own imagery, and when it is not available, it seeks alternatives, such as billboards and graffiti (Hillman, [1989] 2008, p. 105). During the crisis, Athens was visually appropriated as the vehicle of expression for public necessities; the city's soul—the individuals—needed resistance. Resistance was also the refusal to encounter the debris of consumption, the closed stores, while 'spontaneously, the human hand makes its mark, insisting on personalised messages, as human nature everywhere immediately chalks its initials on monuments' (Hillman, [1989] 2008, p. 105). At the same place where its ancient monuments reside, Athens has been transformed into an alternative and always updated 'newspaper'. The 'pages' are the concrete constructions and the activities, 'the news', are recycled depending on the political events that occur over a specific period of the crisis. The city's surfaces become the medium for narrating the contemporary political history of Greece, written at the very moment it occurs. This pivotal importance of the urban surfaces raises a question as to how this imagery of the crisis can be recorded, preserved, and finally constitute a document of the current period. Through my investigation, I outline ways and tools aimed towards documentation of this ephemeral urban reality, an updated 'skin', formulating a methodology that corresponds to the particular case of Athens. The use of virtual maps, relying on the technology and format of Google Maps, enabled me to upload the collected data of the updated skin on virtual data banks, namely

the maps, shown in more detail below, in Chapter 5 ‘De-Mapping the map of Athens in crisis’ and Appendix 1 in juxtaposition.

Going back to the examination of the closed stores, in 2011–2012 I set out on their recording for the first time. I was attracted by their state of flux and metamorphosis, bearers of the city’s updated information. In the following years, there were many times I returned on the spot to re-examine their status: if they were still closed, if they were still active in terms of urban activity, etc. However, during this research project, I have also employed this material for a literal reading of the information inscribed or added to them. This shift from mere political testimonies (slogans) to layering activity—a ‘layer upon layer’ process—would start unveiling the idea of the ‘skin of the city’. Even the unconscious detection and charting of details relevant to strata of posters succeeding to sprayed writing and vice versa was finally early evidence of my doctoral engagement with the derma of Athens. The following visuals (fig. 21-25) bear witness to the 2011–2012 photographically collected data, focusing on details of the imagery of the early crisis. The last one (fig. 25), taken on June 20, 2012, displays a torn poster on a pillar, where Alexis Tsipras’s face—he served as Prime Minister of Greece from 2015 to 2019—is in shreds.



Figure 21 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Urban 'décollaged' forms. Layers of torn posters*, May 2012. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 22 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Layers of torn posters on a metal surface, May 2012. Photography. Athens's city centre.* ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

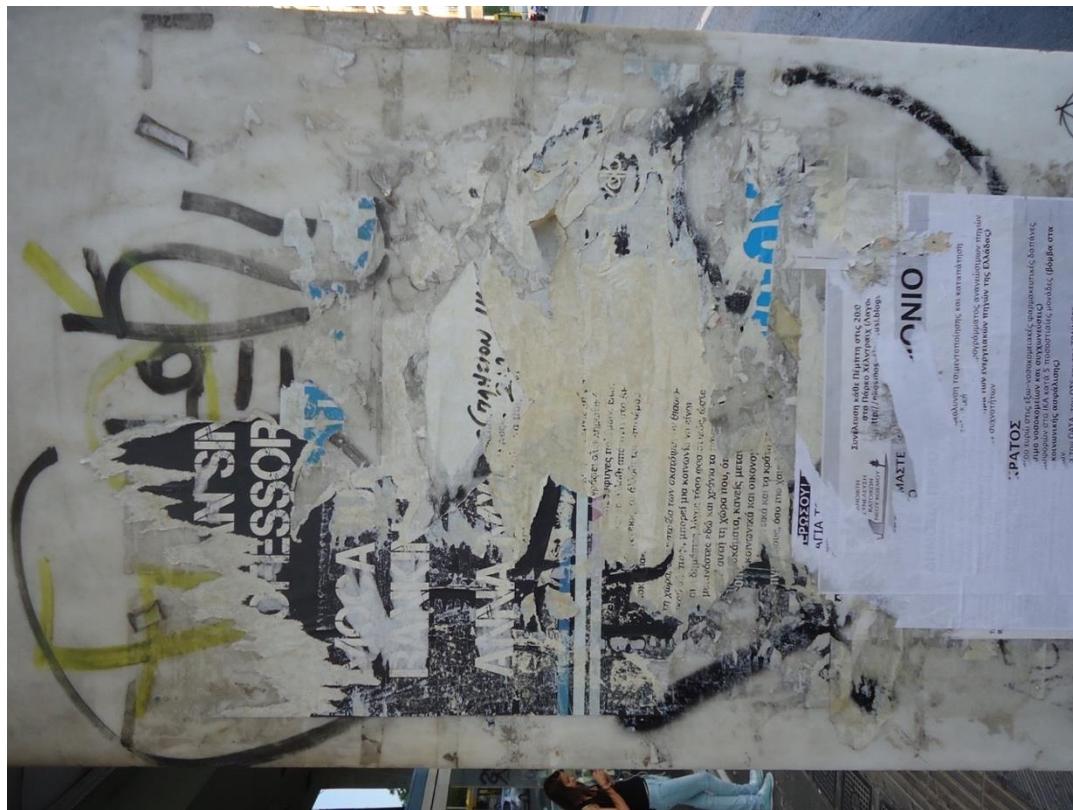


Figure 23 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Torn posters and spray-painted writings, May 2012. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 24 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Urban 'décollaged' forms. Layers of torn posters*, May 2012. Photography. Athens's city centre. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 25 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Torn poster: Alexis Tsipras's face in shreds, June 2012. Photography. Near Maizonos & Ermou str., 26221, Patras. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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At the beginning of this section, I summed up how the financial strand of the recession impacted Greek society, albeit the considerable optical realisation of the crisis that occurred when people began to confront the images of closed stores. The sudden and massive closure of stores distorted the prior urban imagery, in the city centres. Athens's downtown, once lively and vibrant, gradually became a landscape of ruins. 'The ruptures created in urban space by disinvestment, austerity, and years of political struggle constantly produced new surfaces and spaces: boarded-up urban ruins, unfinished buildings, vacant shop windows, and decaying billboards with nothing left to advertise' (Tulke, 2017, p. 202). As I explained above, a germinal photographic phase of my current research took place during the first years of the crisis, when I photographed several closed stores in Athens's city centre (2011, 2012). Although the term *street art* is commonly used to refer to self-authorized visual and material interventions in public space (Tulke, 2017, p. 204), my shift towards photographing the closed stores (and different stages of their visual changes throughout the years of the crisis) focused on the metamorphosis into ruins.

Besides the simple photographic recording, in the following pages I will also unfold how, since 2018, I shifted from mere photographic captures to the adoption of 3D scanning and photogrammetry to re-build the scanned city spots. As the photographer Jonathan Miller (1999) stated for his fragmented urban images, 'It's difficult to reconstruct the scenes from which my "bits" have been captured' (p. 4). Given that technological advancement contributed to virtual and 3D processes, I adopted that digital tool to revive the scenery in detail and depth, a possibility that mere photography could not provide.

Below, it is displayed how the gradual consequences of the recession visualised their impact on the cityscape (fig. 26-27). The stores have massively been closed, and in place of the prior shopfronts (displaying commodities and products), we now notice alternative appropriations of the space.



Figure 26 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A closed store, November 2011. Photography. Omonia sqr. area, 10431, Athens. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

The figure above (26): Image taken in November 2011, showing a closed store near Omonia Square, Satovriandou Str., 10431, Athens's city centre. Wood panels have covered the former showcase, probably to protect its glasses. Remnants of printed matter indicate that layers of posters have been removed and a prior layer of spray-paint writing activity has been unveiled. New writing has been placed on top. The image witnesses a spatiotemporal palimpsest. While looking closely at the two remaining posters in the image, we slightly detect information about a musical that took place on November 19, 2011, at the Athens Concert Hall.



Figure 27 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Closed stores, January 2012*. Photography. Valtetsiou str., 10681, Athens. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

The figure above (27): Image was taken in January 2012. Two closed stores (in the middle and on the left), in Valtetsiou str., 10681, covered with steel panels. The panels served as canvases or ‘notice boards’ for various activities: graffiti, tagging, slogans, and the dominant element, the posters. Equally, in this case, the posters provide spatiotemporal information: dates of December 2011 and January 2012 are indicated, witnessing different events in different parts of Athens.

An attempt to literally read the second image (fig. 27) may assist in retrieving valuable information about the actuality of those times. Once I googled some of the embedded data and mentioned events, there was no information provided relevant to them. The photographic document was therefore an operational tool for dragging the past up. To be precise, by examining the image, the accessible context provided by the posters is mostly socio-political and relevant to events that occurred during that period. Indicatively: 1) a call for an assembly for direct democracy; 2) a 24-hour Attica strike; 3) a concert in support of the strikers in the steel industry; 4) A poster in memory of the 15-year-old student Alexis Grigoropoulos, murdered by the police, states: ‘3 years after the uprising. From the

Photography, 3D scanning and Photogrammetry: Building up the skin government of murderers to the government of fascists'. Other posters state: 5) 'Resistance and action for the freedom of... [an anarchist]', 6) 'Direct action', etc.

An immediate glance at the image witnesses that the public interventions are equally spread on various surfaces. They ignore the involved material, the 'base', and deprive the captured subjects (e.g., the building's door) of their context and functionality. A skin's quality emerges that veils any participating surface. Hence, it is essential to stress at this early photographic phase, that the visual activity, in general, covers all the provided matters: metal, marble columns, walls, the tent, the neoclassical wooden door on the right, etc. Years later, while being engaged in doctoral research (2018–2022), the detection of this expansion by the necessity of space made clearer my research hypothesis of the 'derma', the skin of the city, and its context during the economic crisis. Although terms for this activity have been employed in the quest of examining this phenomenon, my fundamental question of the derma moves beyond ideas such as 'overpainted walls' referring to slogans and graffiti (Karathanasis, 2014, p. 178), 'overwriting the city' for 'graffiti's role as a form of strategic communications in areas of social and political crisis' (Kim, Flores, 2018, p. 9), and graffiti as 'a testament of creativity and artistry' (Stampoulidis, 2016, p. 10). The derma is both a stand-alone organic form overall and a narrator of 'a visual history of non-hegemonic voices, an inscription on the social fabric of Athens that points towards the wider socio-political tensions in the era of austerity and crisis' (Tsilimpounidi, 2015, p. 19). Through my research, the skin is now able to be charted and used as historic evidence, contributing to a future understanding of the crisis.

4.1.4 The Urban Trace as Historic Evidence of the Crisis

Seeking a deeper dimension of meaning in the traces inscribed on the surfaces of Athens may result if we alternatively examine them as historic evidence of the period of the crisis. As most of my documented urban visualised activities now belong to the past—whitewashed, overpainted or replaced by others—my investigation will attempt to link the past to the present and potentially contribute to a future understanding of the crisis's era through them. Although my research includes all the traces (representational and non-representational ones) in a 'skin' unified form, below I will rely on a bibliography relevant to graffiti, seeking a historic and cultural significance in them. Besides, the controversial quality and subjective viewpoint attached to graffiti are also aspects of any marking activity within the cityscape.

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The term ‘graffiti’ is broadly perceived as ‘the illicit scratching, writing, or painting of words or images in public spaces’ (Clay, 2014; 2016, p. 64), and for the majority, the word ‘connotes vandals’ wanton and artless destruction of property’ (Verrall, Clay, 2016, p. 64). Indeed, in Athens during the crisis, there has been a general viewpoint that received the overpainted and overwritten phenomenon as a reflection of ‘the vandalism of the few that has been imposed on the majority’ or ‘the fascism of “the aesthetics” of the few at the expense of the major part’ (Kovaios, 2019). However, bearing in mind the figures we examined before, these traces can break free from the label of ‘vandalism’. They could be a medium for learning about events, people’s habits, and their ways of getting through and struggling with the crisis. If yes, we can then foray into examining an alternative reception, that of historic evidence.

In *Evaluating the cultural significance of historic graffiti*, Alan M. Forster, Samantha Vettese-Forster, and John Borland (2012) argue that both ancient and contemporary graffiti could be advocated as pivotal and therefore worthy of preservation. However, they recognise that the value attached to these forms is a subjective issue, and there is no particular method that is the only way to assess them (p. 43). At this point, I also admit that although studies on Athens’s imagery (accompanied by relevant photographic documents) have emerged during the years of the crisis, there is still a gap both in methodology and interpretation to be investigated. My research and its hypotheses may contribute to innovative ways of documentation and further utilisation through fine art practices. The embraced terminology ‘the skin of the city’ can function as a novel channel to perceive the Athenian phenomenon beyond naming it ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’—terms that identify single cases, not the whole.

A historic reception can provide current graffiti with a ‘cultural significance’, responding to a broadly accepted concept seeking to attach value to the historic built environment (Forster, Vettese-Forster, Borland, 2012, p. 43). As Clay (2014) argues, it is unlikely that Stone Age people would perceive our rather recent notions of distinction between public and private space, for instance, so that we refer to ‘illicit marks’. Likewise, the Vikings, who painstakingly carved runes into the walls of the Neolithic tombs at Maeshowe on Orkney, would not pay attention to whether they were caught while mark-making.

The recording of modern graffiti along with the historic examples should not be perceived as a problem (after all, historic graffiti was once modern), as including the recent material will help to place the historic graffiti in its wider context (Historic England, 2016, p. 1). Taking into consideration all these statements on graffiti’s historic quality, I examine a wider

range of traces accommodated in Athens during the crisis. The systematic recording and the resulting body of documentation could utilise the current urban traces for future purposes. Specifically, to further use them as potential evidence of identity through their meanings and the memory they bear and gradually formulate a new identity. The examination of skin and the collection of wider elements without obeying the rules of artistic criteria may also resolve another problem. Alan M. Forster, Samantha Vettese-Forster, and John Borland (2012), referring to assessing ‘cultural significance’, stress that the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) can be denounced for being ‘insufficiently sensitive to enable the evaluation of historic graffiti due, in part, to the subjective nature of the determination of aesthetic value’ (p. 43). Based on aesthetic criteria, who could decide which Athenian trace is more able to bear historic evidence and which is not?

How could the non-representational aspects of the city’s skin be evaluated as historic evidence? The paper traces of torn posters, photographed in early 2012 (above figures 21-25), surface a specific aspect and moment of the crisis: the more commerce was steadily affected by the crisis and thousands of stores closed, the more these ‘ruins of consumption’ were conquered by expanded paper stratifications. Ripped or updated posters concealed inch by inch the architectural city’s surfaces. The critic and publisher Charles Matlack Price (1922) argued that ‘when a poster fails, its failure is utter and irretrievable, and its inevitable destiny is its consignment to the limbo of waste paper’ (p. 364). Posters such as those I displayed above (2012), which attempted to act as calls for struggle, protest, and demonstrations, may not be successful at their purpose, namely, to overthrow the recession. However, these signs (or the individuals who put them on the wall) that now belong to the past would have never expected that through recording they would play a new role: that of a historic document of a particular period of the crisis. Elizabeth Guffey (2014) recognises that the paper posters’ destiny is unavoidably in the garbage, yet as the traditional poster was overridden, new foundations arose for a different, modified existence of them (p. 92). Guffey refers to how the posters in the hands of artists such as Jacques Villeglé and Marcel Duchamp would render a common poster immediately quaint (2014, pp. 91-92), in other words, art. The Athenian posters’ layers, which still cover entire stores and walls to date, might not produce art, but they visually materialise the crisis and its effects. They formulated the urban imagery of Athens for more than 12 years and the emerging aesthetics of the crisis. When documented, these ephemeral imprints become palpable proof of Greece’s historic evolution in the first 22 years of the 21st century. My role in collecting and utilising this evidence will contribute to a data bank that will be available in the future for any ethnographic or other

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interpretation. Hence, at this stage of my practice and research through photography, I have mainly acted as a collector of the ephemeral, a ‘saver’ of the moment; any further usage remains to be seen in the future as handled by other disciplines.

When the ephemeral survives, it allows us to look at something that would normally be forgotten. This cultural memory practice immortalises history and makes the past live. Nonetheless, it remains a simple glance, as the ephemeral object, whether it purposely or unintentionally survives, cannot revive the past in totality. Ephemera remain a memento of what is obliterated (Mussell, 2012; 78).

Preserving the ephemeral trace of the crisis is hence an apparatus for collecting information for future historical understanding; it is a methodology of not forgetting. Although graffiti, for instance, had previously been seen as an ‘unsanctioned and unwanted addition to an archive of the historic environment’, now it is progressively acknowledged as an element of the historic landscape that ‘we can and should engage with, and from which we can learn about past interactions with space and place’ (Historic Environment Scotland, 2017, p. 5). This visual data can often prove more powerful than a written statement, given that the iconography of an event is a direct approach to that event. By contrast, a verbal description may imply an already-interpreted event.

Let us see the dynamic and prominence of recording ephemeral traces within another framework, different from a financial crisis. This will be the urban trace and its preservation in the Middle East. An economic crisis and a battlefield seem to be quite dissimilar cases to be juxtaposed. Yet, they both produce ruins, affect societies and their civilisations, and finally have a traumatic impact on people. The fragility of world heritage and the embedded ephemerality due to human damaging activities are reflected in the events that occurred in the Middle East in recent years during the destruction of cultural artefacts by ISIS. Michael Danti (2015), academic director of the Syrian Heritage Initiative at the American Schools of Oriental Research, warns that this cultural destruction ‘is the worst cultural heritage emergency since World War II’. This destruction aimed at ‘some of mankind’s most important ancient monuments’, ancient sites that are regarded as the ‘cradle of civilisation’, such as the Greco-Roman city of Palmyra in Syria (Foyle, 2015). Since 2014, ISIS’s destructive acts have not only involved human lives but touched culture as well. They vandalised the sites of Palmyra, Ninevah and Nimrud in the name of their vision for an ultra-conservative Islamic state (Worley, 2017).

Unavoidably, these events were broadly diffused and known to the whole world through the media. However, what would be the role of the artist in preserving them through their traces? The British artist Piers Secunda decided to travel to the Kurdish frontlines of Iraq, as the extensive destruction was the motivation for this dangerous trip, to ‘bring the noise of the world’ into his studio. Secunda did not use painting as a medium for depicting what he saw (Worley, 2017). Instead, he made moulds of the bullet holes on the walls of village buildings, and then he produced a body of plaster cast sculptures, diptychs, and triptychs, replicas of Greek and Assyrian reliefs. The ‘bullet holes’ are not a political statement for the artist, but a way to intergrade ‘the “texture” of geopolitics into the works and bring the machinery of the world outside of the studio into his practice’. His intention is a detailed record of the remaining traces, as these reliefs are close to 3D photorealism and are evidence of violence in the present day (Angeleti, 2017).

Some similarities between my research and Secunda’s are located as follows: we both opted for initial fieldwork to detect and record our subject matter, namely traces on surfaces, walls, etc. We both did not rely on classical mediums such as painting but on new technologies and, in particular, apparatuses more identical to reality and detail (photographic representations). Secunda was stimulated and sought the extensive destruction of a field of war, while I was urged by the visual detritus of an economic crisis. Yet we were both involved in an attempt to go beyond the given state of ruin through fine art practices and move towards the further development (utilisation) of a new body of fine art practice. Secunda collected his primary data—traces of holes from bullets—on the spot, using a substance normally employed by dentists called ‘alginate’ (Worley, 2017), while also detaching part of the wall once the mould was applied. In my fieldwork instead, my involvement was digital via my mobile camera, with no physical interference with the space or any removal or alteration of its materiality, tangibility, etc. Secunda adjusted these bullets’ moulds to a narrative iconography, e.g., St George slaying the dragon, and in general to ‘several ancient Assyrian and Mesopotamian artworks to perforate with the bullet holes’ (Worley, 2017). His final pieces were relief sculptures resembling icons, thus embossing material outcomes. In contrast, I represented my scanned areas or city subjects afterwards, digitally or in a printed flat form, on their own. However, an essential similarity is that we both took advantage of the fragmented shape-making, responding to destruction in a non-harmonic or geometrical model that was rather distracting. In the following pages, I will show in detail my own ‘mould-making’ digital processes to rebuild the urban sceneries I had previously scanned in Athens. I will further refer below to this body of Athenian scanned

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iconography and how it was indeed representative and achieved to gather shreds of the skin of the city (fragmentation). For now, I will remain attentive for a while to the historic significance of the details that could also transfer this value to the general form (derma).

In this attempt, I relied on Historic England's (2016) document, *Recording Historic Graffiti: Advice and Guidance*. This is a document to help people working in the historic field 'with basic advice and guidance for the systematic recording of graffiti of all types and ages', as well as 'practical advice on recording techniques and some indication as to the range of information that can be learnt' (p. 1). I attempted to apply the information and guidance given by Historic England to all the traces' activity in Athens, not only graffiti cases. According to Historic England, even though graffiti is mostly seen as a problem to be excised, there is an increasing tendency to study it, producing 'surprisingly large amounts of detail about things such as people's habits, occupations, and literacy as well as historical events' (2016, p. 1). In this way, the slogans or the paper traces that covered the closed stores can be examined and considered one day as an 'alternative case study' to further understand Greece's contemporary history.

This is one of my intentions: to perceive and read the traces of Greece's crisis as vehicles of historical evidence; to contribute the body of my whole study to a prospective ethnographic examination of the period. Nonetheless, I move away from forms easily recognised as 'graffiti' and 'street art'. First, graffiti pieces might be clues with potential displays of artistry, style, etc. On the contrary, I seek to unveil forms seemingly indifferent, anonymous, with no embedded skillfulness, as witnesses of the evolution of the appearance of the city due to the crisis. Secondly, graffiti normally occupies a small part of a more extended historic building or structure (Historic England, 2016, p. 6); it is, therefore, an ingredient of a broader whole.

Although my research includes details and fragments of Athens, it finally examines the broader phenomenon, the form of the 'skin of the city'. To be precise, how all the ingredients that have covered the architectural structures gradually formulated a proliferated shape responding to the recession. Notwithstanding, the components and their examination may attribute the qualities that characterise 'the bigger picture' (skin). Susan A. Phillips (1996) observes that as it is out of the question to restrict or manage the available resources of graffiti making, it constitutes a medium that is 'expandable, flexible, and difficult to control'. As an 'open channel', it only serves and moulds its makers' needs. Phillips's above-mentioned features of expansibility, flexibility, and uncontrollability distinguish the skin as

well, given that it took considerable time for this saturated and all-embracing form to be shaped. A sole ingredient (e.g. graffiti) may be expendable, replaced, or whitewashed, albeit the idea that the skin is powerful, omnipresent, and unmanageable. At a later stage of this thesis, I will meticulously refer to how the official authorities have raided the urban imagery, applying strategies of the ‘clean city’ to vanquish this form. To account for and record its resilience, expandability, and transformability in space and time, I will explain in detail below how I rely on new technologies for this purpose. One of the tools used for this goal is, for instance, Google Maps, which provided a virtual past *flânerie* (drifting). While retrieving past activities and layers, it is displayed how this contagious form slowly but firmly covered (and still covers) the city. By attempting to evaluate this skin, we could proceed to understand its historic significance.

If there were some basic criteria to assess the value of urban inscriptions, the question would be how they would correspond to the Athenian traces of crisis. I consider the advice and guidance of Historic England (2016, p. 3) about graffiti to apply this information to my examination of all the elements that constitute Athens’s imagery. According to Historic England (2016), first, even those urban forms that are not related to historical events must be recorded at an equal level, as their significance may not be immediately obvious. Missing the opportunity to record a current item, may have an impact on its significance in the future, especially when it is not available anymore (Historic England, 2016, p. 2, 4, pp. 7-8.). In fact, after almost 12 years of my primary recorded slogans, one can now say that they witnessed the public requests of those times, what made people take to the street and demonstrate, or see them as prophetic statements of the forthcoming crisis. Yet, as I explained in detail above, in response to Historic England’s advice, even the torn traces of the posters bear proof of the crisis’s effects on commerce.

According to Historic England (2016, pp. 9-10), some factors that may define the significance of graffiti based on values are:

Evidential: the ability of a place to produce evidence about past activity that can be understood through contemporary objects.

Historical: how we can connect the present with how people lived before and the events they experienced

Aesthetic: how people sense and are intellectually stimulated by a location.

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Communal: what does a place mean for the people who are connected to it? So graffiti can reflect local communities' thoughts relevant to specific events

In an attempt to juxtapose these factors (values) within the framework of Athens, I could summarise as follows:

Evidential: any current trace can produce evidence of the evolution of Athens and be linked to all the past layers, from ancient times and antiquity to date.

Historical: the period of the crisis will unavoidably have a historical layer about how people lived before and after it.

Aesthetic: as all these traces compose an immense skin throughout the city, mostly the younger generations or those who were born some years before the crisis have been experiencing this aesthetic as the general image of the contemporary city.

Communal: how people use the city to express themselves and how their echo may represent or influence the general public, whether an intervention in the cityscape (e.g., the meaning of a slogan) embodies their feelings or not.

We can thus see how the potential to assess the contemporary trace emerges. Namely, how to use it as evidence of understanding a whole historical period of Greece through an alternative resource or proof. How the ephemeral traces of the crisis—often indifferent in terms of the immensity of their presence and their long-lasting endurance to reappear—can produce a body of historical knowledge when collected and preserved. Could my collection be part of that additional layer for this understanding? Besides, could my new body of practice, methodology, and outcomes alter the way we see these traces as I go one step further from a mere recording? These are some questions I attempt to further approach throughout this thesis. For this reason, in the following section, I will show how, from the primary photographic phases in the early-crisis period, I shifted into an engagement with new technologies and the production of 3D simulations based on photography. Through this evolution of media in my research, I will point out: 1) the significance of scanning methodologies in representing in detail the selected subject matters as entities; and 2) the potential of the produced forms to act as stand-alone new agents, objects with their own ontological identity (shape, colour, skin, etc.). Therefore, I attempted to transcend the limitations of the sole photographic representation.

4.2 3D scanning and Photogrammetry: Building up the skin

4.2.1 From the single photograph to 3D scanning and 3D models

Photographing visual urban mementoes is a way of capturing one ‘moment’ of them in the landscape. However, the problem with just capturing a moment is that it goes against the temporal nature of the landscape. Additionally, it loses sight of how visual markers, on their way to becoming fragments, go to make up a unity, a skin. As I stated before, in his book *Camera Lucida*, Barthes (1981, pp. 5-6) argued that a photograph will always be a representation of something that is long gone, dead. One photograph alone cannot capture that which is transient and ephemeral. Barthes raises the problem of the single image as an incarnation of the ephemeral and consequently points towards the necessity of seeking a more advanced way of doing virtual simulations. This accounts for my decision to use 3D methods, such as scanning and 3D virtual models, that transcend the individual image(s). The digital image is a mere piece of this reality, a constitutional element in support of a greater composition. Likewise, graffiti or a street art form are aliquot elements of the skin of the city that comprise all the imprints equally, regardless of their artistry or lack of craftsmanship, intentionally made or not. The benefit of the resulting 3D-rebuilt fragment is a more detailed simulacrum of reality, produced from an ensemble of details in comparison to a single photo. The outcome of the 3D recording can be seen from various viewpoints, an impossibility as far as a single flat photographic image is concerned.

In the case of Athens in crisis and its overwritten surfaces, this 3D modelling approach seems rather unavoidable, given that we are not dealing with mere graffiti or slogans. In contrast, we have to consider the documentation in terms of a ‘skin’ that extends beyond any given surface. It cannot be framed; it cannot be contained by the limits of shopfronts or the size of walls. As we are unable to document the whole city, only fragmented pieces of reality can be recorded, and these display how political developments have submitted the city to a rapid and eternal transfiguration. The visual markers left by the makers establish a new reality of struggle and metamorphosis. The city’s surfaces are the canvas and the social conditions that trigger these visual traces to speak their numerous stories. These urban marks are the tools for converting the walls into ‘social diaries’, leading marginalised and minority groups to self-expression, active participation in the writing of a visual history, and the production of a culture in need of urban re-visions (Tsilimpounidi, 2015, p. 18).

Tilley (2008, p. 271) points out that mediated experiences such as photographs, paintings of simulations, and other types of representations can only provide a shallow preservation of the actual. The context will always be amiss in a single picture, even though a picture is ‘worth a thousand words’, as will the subjective and unique interpretation of the person experiencing it. Again, the problematic nature of the single image is obvious; a scrap of reality can rarely provide a more detailed immersion and, thus, a more detailed experience.

4.2.2 **New research tools: Digital means and new technologies epitomise ephemerality**

New technologies are utilised in my attempt to uncover ways to study the diverse ephemeral traces spread throughout the city. These means include digital photography in landscape documentation software, which will assist in breaking the temporal and ephemeral barrier. Photography and documentation, as well as any future potential dissemination (social media, publications, etc.), infuse an indifferent trace with the quality of an important cultural element and make it ‘known’. Otherwise, it would pass unnoticed or be seen as a mere ‘scribble’, ‘stain’, or ‘dirt’. This is what Robert Reisner (1971) stated as an answer to the question ‘What is graffiti?’: ‘dirty words on clean walls’ (p. 24). Besides, how could the condition of this crisis, this distinct ‘skin’, be preserved and diffused if not through visual conservation?

An example of this kind of visual conservation is the case of Pollphail village in Scotland, which was never destined for protection as a monument; the photographic documentation of graffiti before its demolition was indeed an act of ‘preservation through record’ (Hale, Anderson, 2020, p. 162). The graffiti brought a new, even ephemeral, and ‘alternate value and function into the process of ruination’ (2020, p. 163). This process provided graffiti with a new dimension: visibility. It was furnished with the ability to be seen and noticeable, thanks to the camera and the mapping of pictures (2020, p. 163). Based on the case of Pollphail village, I intended to contribute the recorded material as an alternative visual narrative of Athens in crisis for any future purpose, similar to what Historic England (2016) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES, 2017) have undertaken in their preservation of historic landscapes.

4.2.3 The digital camera and digital file types

An essential medium for direct documentation and instant activation of material is the digital camera of the mobile phone. With no other ‘heavy equipment’ such as tripods, lenses, and filters, and no prior (professional) knowledge and skills of photography, the mobile camera plays the role of a ‘sketch book’ for future and further explorations. Although the camera could offer a flat result taken from one perspective, multiple clicks offer an array of details of the same subject from numerous viewpoints. These details are then used to build up a 3D model, reassembling the formerly fragmented data into a new unity: a fragment of reality.

A principal tool in my research so far has been *Agisoft Metashape* (previously known as Agisoft Photoscan). On the ‘About Photoscan’ section of Agisoft’s webpage, it is stated that ‘cultural heritage documentation’ is one of the roles that this software has played so far (Agisoft.com, 2009). However, I have been using it as a fundamental tool for recording and keeping track of the ephemerality of the urban space and any expressed or implied culture relevant to the city’s identity during the crisis.

By tapping into a digital tool that also offers a virtual environment of the scanned subject, I have periodically recorded spots in Athens, urban walls, and city objects. Opting for regular documentation of the same subject matter every three or four months permitted me to achieve a visual mapping of their evolution and transformation. Due to the city’s size and the immense extension of the urban visual tracing throughout it, I can only work on some fragments and record their visual changes through time. However, as I have earlier mentioned (Introduction: ‘Methodological reflections’), this scope limitation can be handled in favour of the practice in the long run. By recording specific spots in the long term, a visual history of these places, spaces, or spots (or urban objects) can emerge. Once several recordings as a sequence are finished, the practice can be extended to examine how the evolutionary layers could coexist and be shown as a sequence in the same place. As I will develop in detail in Chapter 5 (and Appendix 1), this will be achieved by hijacking an ordinary map, Google Maps, by making a pin that corresponds to the real spot. This pin can host any uploaded material and thus unfold a visual history, a ‘myth’, about this place. The decision to claim Google Maps deals without doubt with the fact that these maps are part of our lives, and we are accustomed to them. Furthermore, this adoption stresses an emergent new potential: a tool of everyday life is utilised as a research tool and simultaneously a medium for distributing visual information, art practice, etc. Therefore, the public/audience does not necessarily consist of people accustomed to the arts. The audience unconsciously

becomes a visitor, a guide for their tour, a walker or wanderer (*flâneur*) in a virtual space. One may even decide to visit other places or a combination of places; in other words, each roaming is unique. Hence, the role of the viewer is dynamically multivalent while getting into this reality. In Chapter 5 and Appendix 1, I will further discuss this potential and show indicative examples of the immersive experience provided as if one were part of the urban landscape. Hence, for now, I will carry on developing how Photoscan Pro assisted my research and further infused my thought processes and practice with new insights.

The introduction of this programme on Agisoft's official page is as follows:

'Agisoft Metashape is a stand-alone software product that performs photogrammetric processing of digital images and generates 3D spatial data to be used in GIS applications, cultural heritage documentation, and visual effects production as well as for indirect measurements of objects of various scales'

(Agisoft.com, 2009).

The reference to 'stand-alone' also marks my conceptual engagement with it. While I gradually adopted it, I perceived that I was relying on it both as a process and the given outcomes as if it were a 'partner' and we were working as a duo. More specifically, I accepted and adapted its results without any intervention during the digital process or transferring its exported files into another programme (Illustrator, Photoshop, etc.) to modify the image. Apart from this aesthetic and modal accordance, I was impressed and interested in the intelligence of the programme; for instance, how the different stages were built, how it decided to compose, recompose, or decompose the given reality, how it treated fragmentation, etc. As I examine the case of Athens as a 'skin', a general phenomenon, it is important to see how the programme recreated this 'skin' and also provided additional dimensions to this skin.

4.2.4 From the digital detail to the virtual fragment: a specific-to-general methodology to simulate the city's skin

To virtually reconstruct fragments of the skin of Athens in crisis, one should equally examine any trace provided within the city, not only the easily perceived forms such as 'graffiti' and 'street art'. The trace persists in time and has its origins in city interferences like slogans, graffiti, murals, posters' layers, etc. that gradually deteriorate. While the original form

declines, the remaining trace is simultaneously redefined as the next layer of activity appears, reformulating the skin of the city.

Graffiti pieces can be considered urban objects intended to display artistry, a specific style, etc. By contrast, an attempt to understand the ‘skin’ involves a foray into seemingly indifferent, anonymous forms with little apparent skill, witnesses of the evolution of the appearance of the city due to the crisis. In addition, as I mentioned before, graffiti forms usually cover a limited part of a more extended historic building or structure (Historic England 2016, p. 6). They are therefore merely an ingredient in a broader whole. Although I generally included such artistic details of Athens in my investigation, I finally examined the broader phenomenon, the form of the ‘skin of the city’.

The following visual steps demonstrate how 3D modelling builds up a representation of this city’s skin. Further, how the 3D technology proceeds in a step-by-step process of skin making, based on a methodology of moving ‘from a digital detail to the virtual fragment’. Thus, a technology primarily designed to create 3D models (new objects) can also represent a city surface rich in texture and marks (a materially layered field) in a non-material field with artificial depth.

4.2.5 Building up the skin of crisis: the steps

This case study deals with city objects that accommodate tracing activities. To be precise, it engages with several urban metal boxes found on the corner of Solonos and Emmanouil Benaki Str., 10678, Athens, Greece. My decision to display various volumes within the public space instead of a wall provides a visual example of how any available surface is appropriated and participates in the making of the skin. For building up the following 3D model, 89 ‘details (images in .jpeg format) were used. The spot was recorded on July 31, 2019, from 1.39 p.m. to 1.43 p.m. (4 minutes were spent *in situ*) with a mobile camera. The process is completed in five steps, which are visually displayed below (fig. 28-32).

1st-2nd steps: As a first step, ‘Add folder’, the details of the scanned spot are imported into Photoscan Pro, and the second is ‘Align images’ (fig. 28-29).

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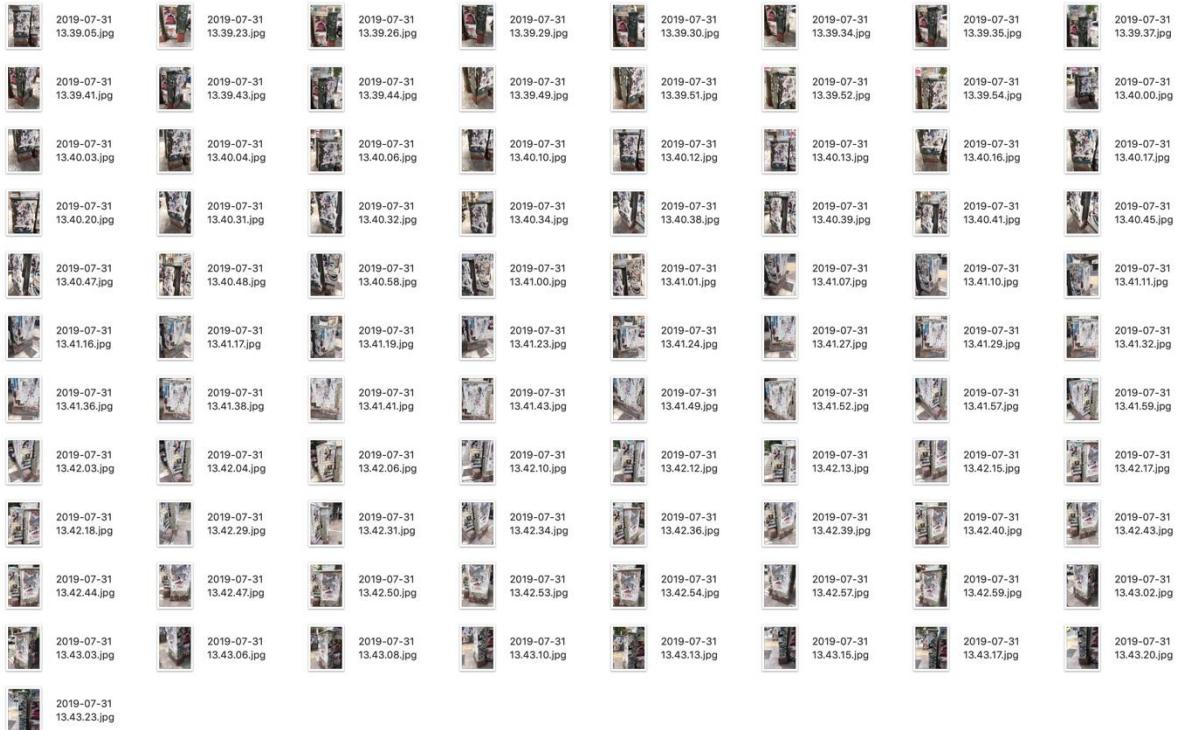


Figure 28 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Screenshot of jpeg images used as imported files for the 3D model (1st and 2nd step), 2019. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

Name	Date Modified	Size	Kind
2019-07-31 13.39.05.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.2 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.23.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	2.8 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.26.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.29.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.2 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.30.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	2.9 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.34.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	2.9 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.35.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.37.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.2 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.41.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.3 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.43.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.3 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.44.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.1 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.49.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.2 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.51.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.2 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.52.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.1 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.39.54.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:39	3.2 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.40.00.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:40	3.1 MB	JPEG image
2019-07-31 13.40.03.jpg	31 Jul 2019 at 13:40	3.3 MB	JPEG image

Figure 29 Panagiotis Ferentinos, jpeg images imported as 'details' for constructing the 3D model, 2019. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

3rd step: ‘Build Dense Cloud’. The details, as traces, start to bring to light the fragment. The shape of the fragment is still fluid, like a powder of dots. The first appearance of the skin (fig. 30).

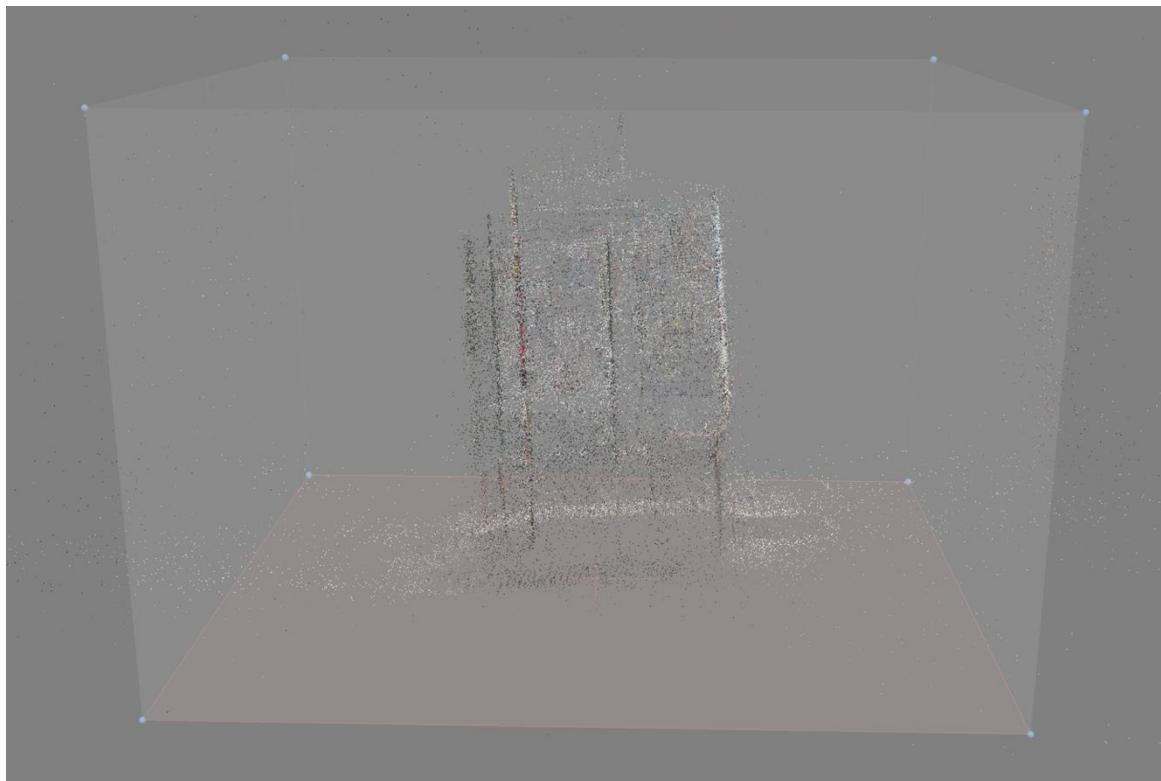


Figure 30 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Build Dense Cloud', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4th step: 'Build Mesh'. The shape of the fragment is now defined; the detail has become its entirety. The colour of the skin is still undefined. At this stage, we see a grey muddy surface with some tactile indications (fig. 31).

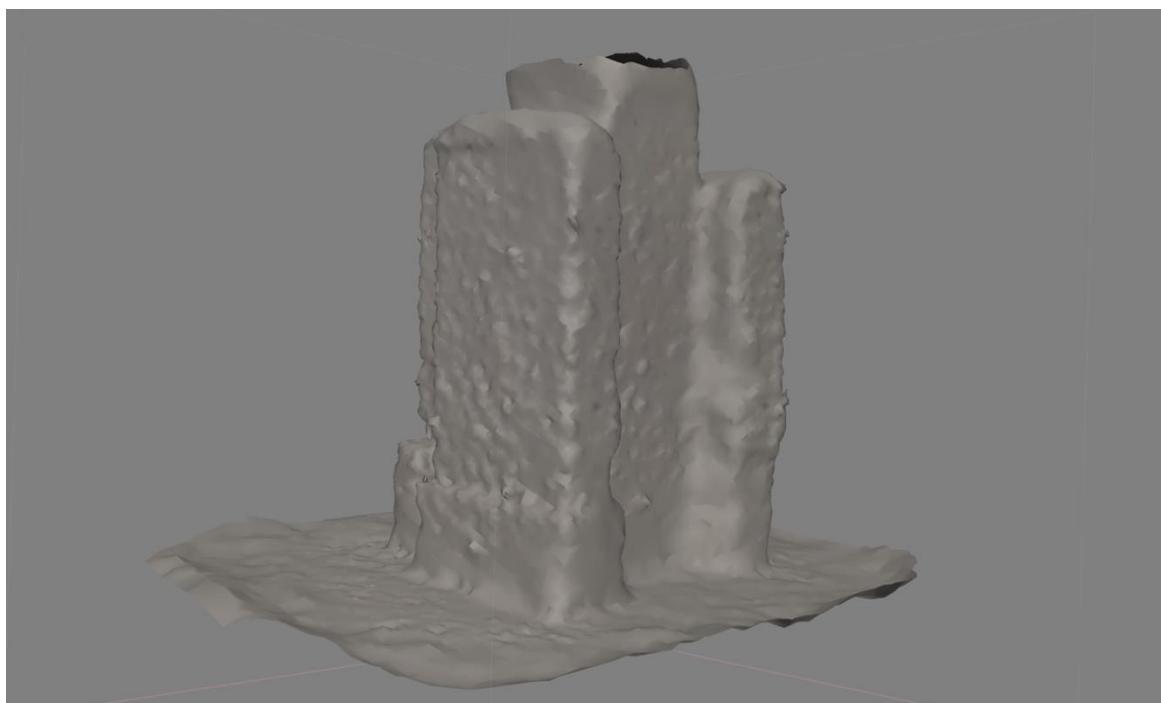


Figure 31 Figure 56 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Build Dense Cloud', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

5th step: ‘Build Texture’. The fragment is now complete. It is full of original information, such as details, texture, light, and colour (fig. 32).



Figure 32 Panagiotis Ferentinos, ‘Build Texture’, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.2.6 Additional virtual ‘skins’

Photoscan’s toolbar provides a few view options so that new skins are possible. Each option imparts a different texture and colour to the fragment. The shape of the fragment appears different as well. This result suggests the potential of technology to handle the given details diversely and construct the model differently, providing new shapes, tactility, and colour. Compare the images below ‘Dense Cloud’ (fig. 33) and ‘Dense Cloud Classes’ (fig. 36) with ‘Solid’ (fig. 35) and ‘Textured’ (fig. 34) to understand this diversity (fig. 33-36). For example, the ‘Dense cloud’ option provides a rusty, rough texture (fig. 33). ‘Solid’ option suggests a homogenous purple skin that covers the whole surface of the fragment, yet the scanned volumes shape a tonal gradation (fig. 35). ‘Dense cloud Classes’ option looks similar to ‘Solid’, although with white and grey tints, and the constructed shape of the fragments is different (fig. 36).



Figure 33 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Dense cloud', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 34 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Textured', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

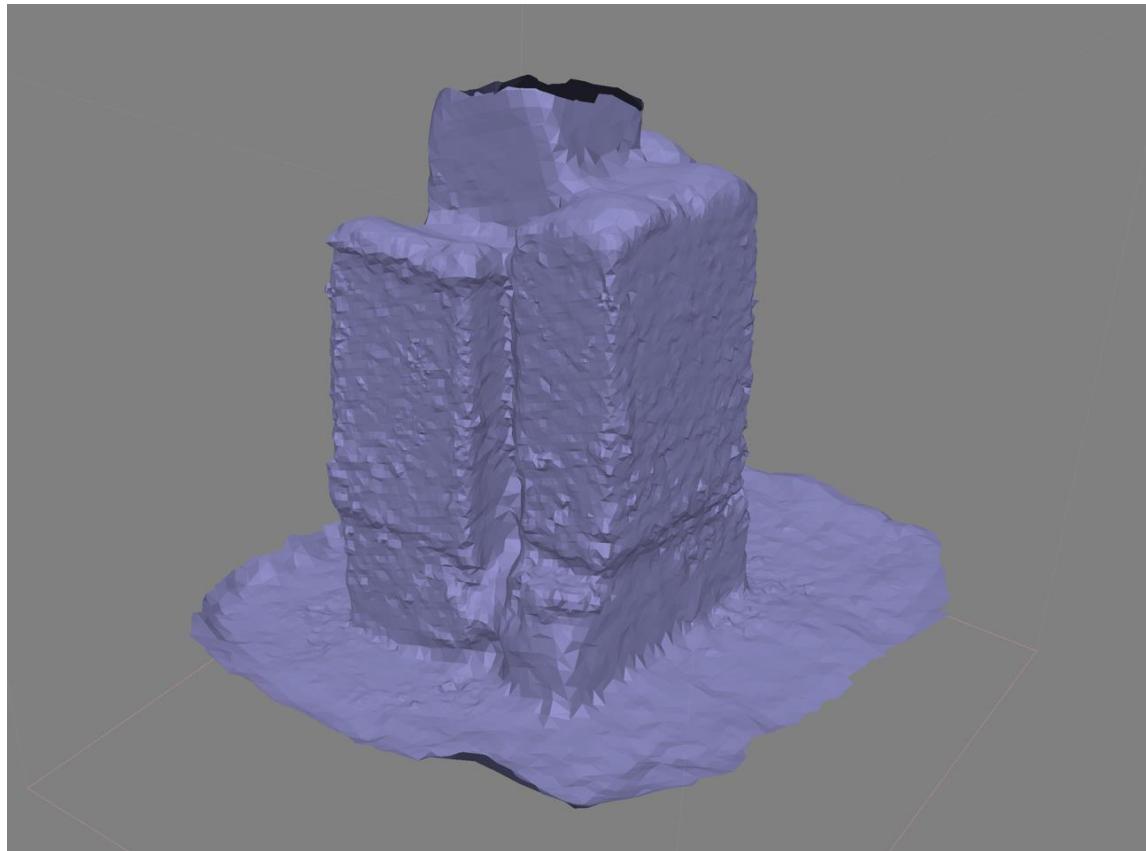


Figure 35 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Solid', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

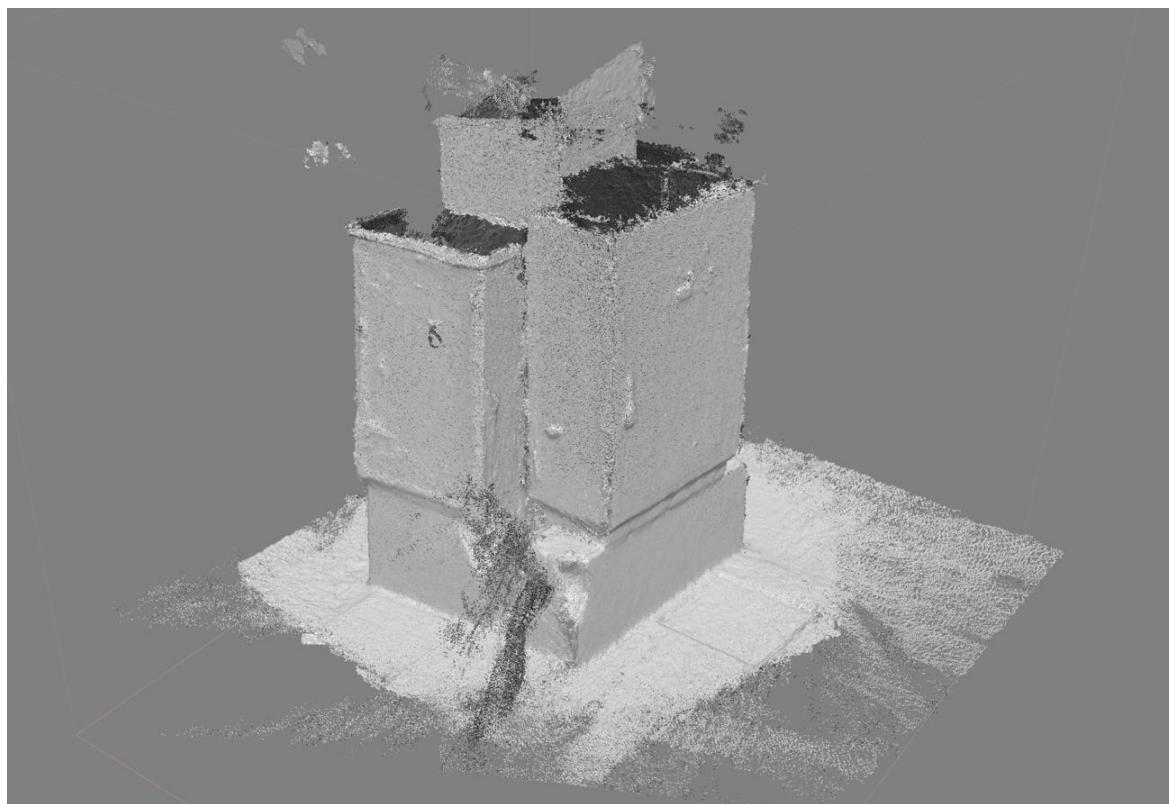


Figure 36 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Dense cloud Classes', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

The selected programme, Photoscan Pro, indeed provided me with skins. The metal boxes are made of a substance, possibly steel, and also include and protect other ones, such as the cables of telecommunication. They are firmly stuck to another substance, a cement pillar made of reinforced concrete. However, if we meticulously look at the below image (fig. 37), a screenshot taken from the bottom side, we will notice that there is no solid body. The object is hollow, and what we discern is nothing more than a folded epidermis (derma) that simulates the real subject matter. Certainly, the model mimics reality, given that it goes after the interpretation of the various niches following the authentic object.

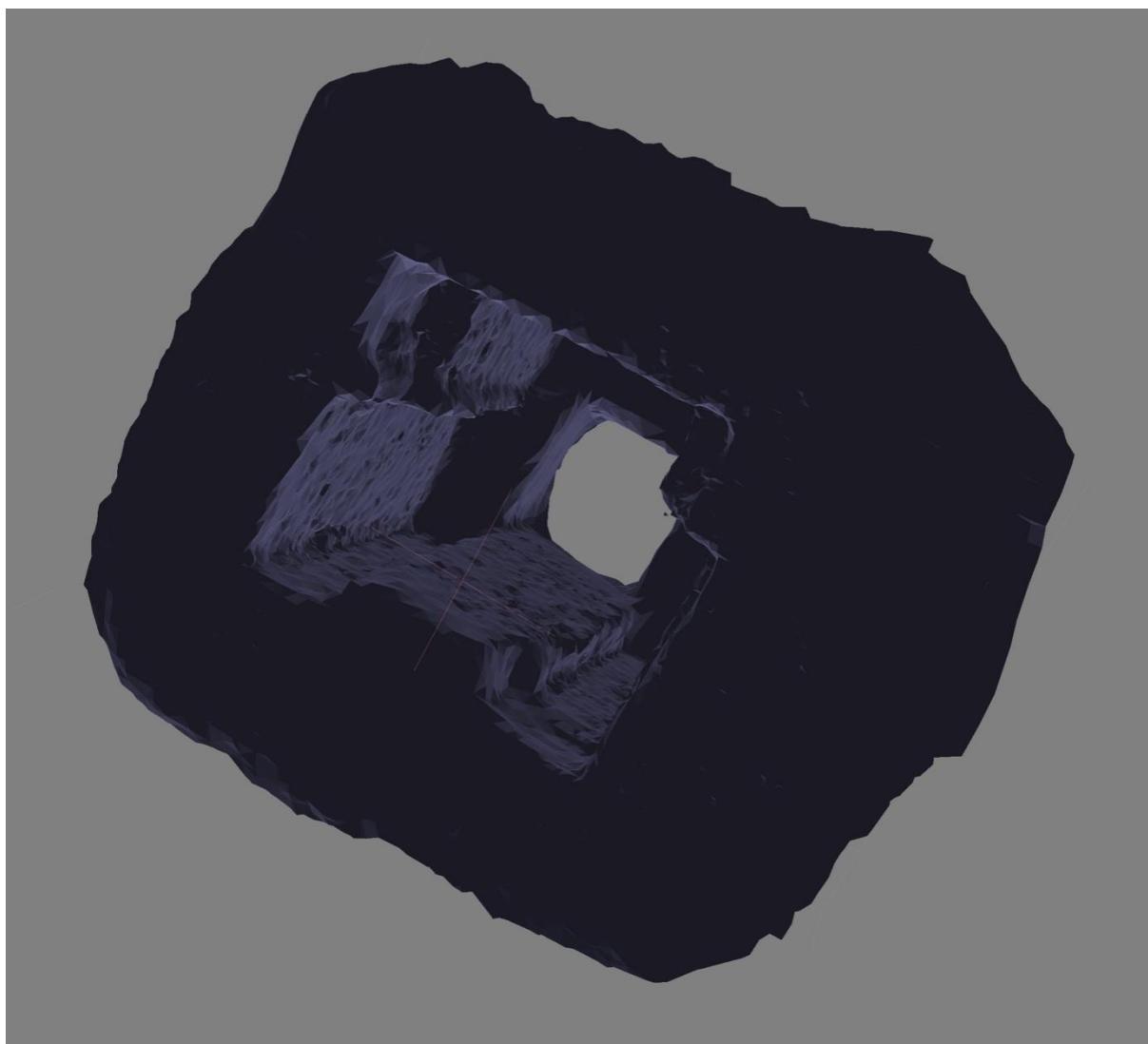


Figure 37 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 'Solid', 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

For a better understanding of how Photoscan Pro perfectly fits into the skin's investigation, I will show below how a horizontal surface corresponds to this association between selected software and a research inquiry. As a subject matter, I opted for the shopfront of a closed store and the main entrance door of a neighbouring building, at Ethnikis Antistaseos 60 str., Dafni, 17237, Athens, Greece (fig. 38). It was impressive how the poster-made skin had

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exceeded the abandoned shop and proliferated on the door of a liveable place to such an extent that neither of them was easily discernible. Even the pillars in between were also possessed. That was evidence of the unstoppable skin, which was carrying on with other activity on the left and the right, beyond the photographically framed scene. The spot was recorded on the 17th of December 2019 during night fieldwork, from 00.55 a.m. to 00.56 a.m. (just 1 minute was spent *in situ*) with a mobile camera. For this 3D model, 17 ‘details’ (.jpeg images) were used.



Figure 38 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A closed store, the pillars, and the main door of a building, all covered with layers of posters; evidence of the skin, 2019. Photogrammetry. Ethnikis Antistaseos 60 str., 17237, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

When we look at the above image (fig. 38), we recognise the credibility of this simulacrum. It successfully manages to render the sense of the night view with accuracy and detail thanks to the 3D scanning decision. Once zooming in, even the creases of the posters (since they were glued to the vitrine) are registered. The niches created by the pillars produce an artificial depth, while we have the impression that we can see through the shopfront’s glasses. Yet this is impossible; only the epidermis is recorded. Once the model is rotated, we encounter the succinctness of the charted reality. Only a mapping of the elements laid on the surface is gathered into a new form to claim the real territory.

Jean Baudrillard, in *Simulations* (1983), discusses this connection between the map and the territory and the birth of the simulacrum. He insists that the current simulators, in an imperialistic way, endeavour to enforce the real, indeed all the real, to overlap their simulacra (p. 2). If we return to the above figure, we will notice that the skin has a perfect application to its host that functions as the ‘armature’ of the simulacrum; its ceaseless and contagious bearings respond to a kind of imperialism. Baudrillard, however, annotates on the ‘representational imaginary’ that is superseded (‘disappears’) by the simulacrum, as it ‘both culminates in and is engulfed [...] an ideal coextensivity between the map and the territory’ (1983, p. 3). The skin takes the place of reality, and the recording can only define (and be limited to) fragments to detect its excessive nature to cover the territory. What is finally real, though? The real is formed of ‘miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks, and command models, and with these, it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times’ (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 3). This approach corresponds to how the fragmented outcomes resulted in the scanning methodologies being miniatures of ‘the big picture’, as the whole city cannot be scanned. They memorise the very specific moment they represent and thus offer evidence of memory in turn. Baudrillard’s reference to ‘command models’ (1983, p. 3) as being able to make copies forever accounts for how Photoscan’s software has the potential to produce alternative perspectives or simply reproduce the former ones. The current reality, likewise, the skin of crisis, may go extinct, but the models race against time. What is, in the end, real? ‘It is nothing more than operational’ (1983, p. 3), and the simulacrum becomes real. One day the crisis will be recalled through its visualised fragments, and thus my current research adds a layer to this mapping of memory.

Yet, it is necessary to go back to the last figure and examine what kind of simulacrum this virtual form is. Baudrillard (1983) saw the simulacrum as the ‘hyperreal’, so it can be an exaggerated imitation of reality, extremely realistic in detail. However, at what level can it take the place of reality (p. 3)? According to him, it is a ‘product’, that comprises an ‘irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere’ (1983, p. 3). Let us consider this ‘hyperspace’ quality in the 3D models and the lack of atmosphere. In the following image (fig. 39), instead of the frontal view, presented as a colourful, phantasmagoric panorama, the profile view unveils that the simulacrum is nothing more than a jacket, a thin peel of reality. Everything occurs within a sliver of reality sliced off at that given moment. The frontal view deceives the eye, believing in vain that it can see through and beyond the poster-layered shield. The profile view emerges as counterfeit, while it does not reproduce the emptiness of the closed store inside caused by the crisis.

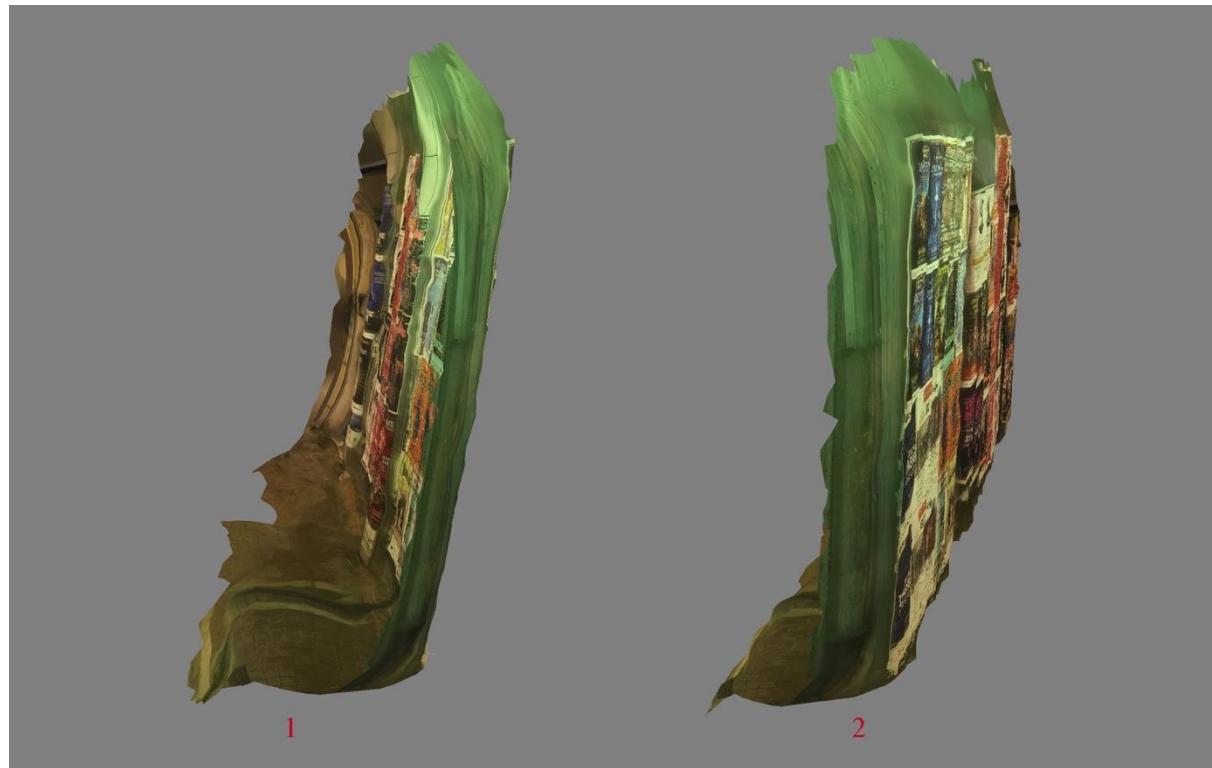


Figure 39 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Profile view (right side). 1: part of the frontal side. 2: part of the backside, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.3 Case Study: 3D models and the strata of the skin

Project title: *Viva la Revolucion*

Place: Emmanouil Benaki 90 str., 10681, Athens, Greece

The project was named *Viva La Revolucion* (*Long live the revolution*) after a slogan discerned on the wall, written in Spanish. Four periodical recordings of the location are adduced below, displaying different stages of urban metamorphosis (fig. 41-44). These stages can function to visually unveil the public interventions and the resultant successive mutations of an apparently ordinary Athenian wall. Let us remember Hillman's ([1989] 2008) idea of the soul of a city, fulfilling herself through images made by 'the human hand, that seems to want to touch and leave its touch', to 'make sure that the hand has its place in the city' (p. 105). Hillman seems to recur to an allegoric employment of the terms 'city' and 'soul'. A city (it could be the state, authorities, etc.) that disregards the soul's (citizens) well-being forces the soul to look for its well-being in a disgracing and solid way. Well-being is

principally the city's esoteric phenomenon, and is not associated with economic or social factors, it is primordially a problem of the psyche. When the soul is neglected, it becomes 'an angry child' (p. 106). This angry child attacks 'the city that has depersonalized it with a depersonalized rage, a violence against the very objects—storefronts, park monuments, public buildings—which stand for uniform soullessness' ([1989] 2008, p. 106).

The skin displayed below, as part of the city's 'soul' and made by 'the human hand' (Hillman [1989] 2008, p. 105) has been subjected to numerous attacks by the 'angry child' [the citizen] ([1989] 2008, p. 106) responding to austerity, rendering the public imagery a contested space. I recorded periodical strata of this transformation, after being impressed by the compositional dynamic of the wide variety of traces, written or pasted (fig. 41-44). These components were finally merged into one condensed unit. The image of compression that emerges makes us perceive that the need for marking and leaving a trace behind on the wall is more powerful than finding a clean space to accentuate a slogan. These spontaneously performed writings, without preparation, evoke *Art Informel* ('Informal Art') forms, 'an improvisatory methodology and highly gestural technique' (Tate, 2020). Certainly, the human intention was not to achieve abstract expressionism. In other words, to embrace ideas such as automatism or informal procedures, often gestural, breaking the tradition of order and composition in art (Tapié, 1952). Without a doubt, these images from Athens's urban imagery unavoidably interrogate the tactics of the abstract expressionists. Yet the question is the act, beyond aesthetical rationality. Is it an unconscious and primitive human need to carve rather than shape or convey a representative message? This notion also interrogates the current graffiti as 'contentious' and the ancient one (e.g., Viking runes in Maes Howe) as 'a vital part of the historic environment' (Historic Environment Scotland, 2017, p. 4). How is one provocative, and the latest is evidence of culture? Does it have to do with Merrill's (2011, p. 381) argument that contemporary graffiti 'has an ephemeral status, a physical presence that appears and can as quickly disappear'? If this is the question, a methodology that will preserve this imagery may provide significance to this ordinary wall that relentlessly arranges and re-arranges itself.

At last, looking at the below images (41-44), the outcome resembles an unlimited and ever-changing abstractive collage. The activity is not restricted to the wall area but also extends nearby to the building's surfaces, including its main entrance, the metal panels of the store on the left, and so on. I below adduce where exactly this wall is located (Google Maps, fig. 40) and a table that includes the details of the realised four fieldwork recordings.

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4.3.1 The scanned spot on Google Maps

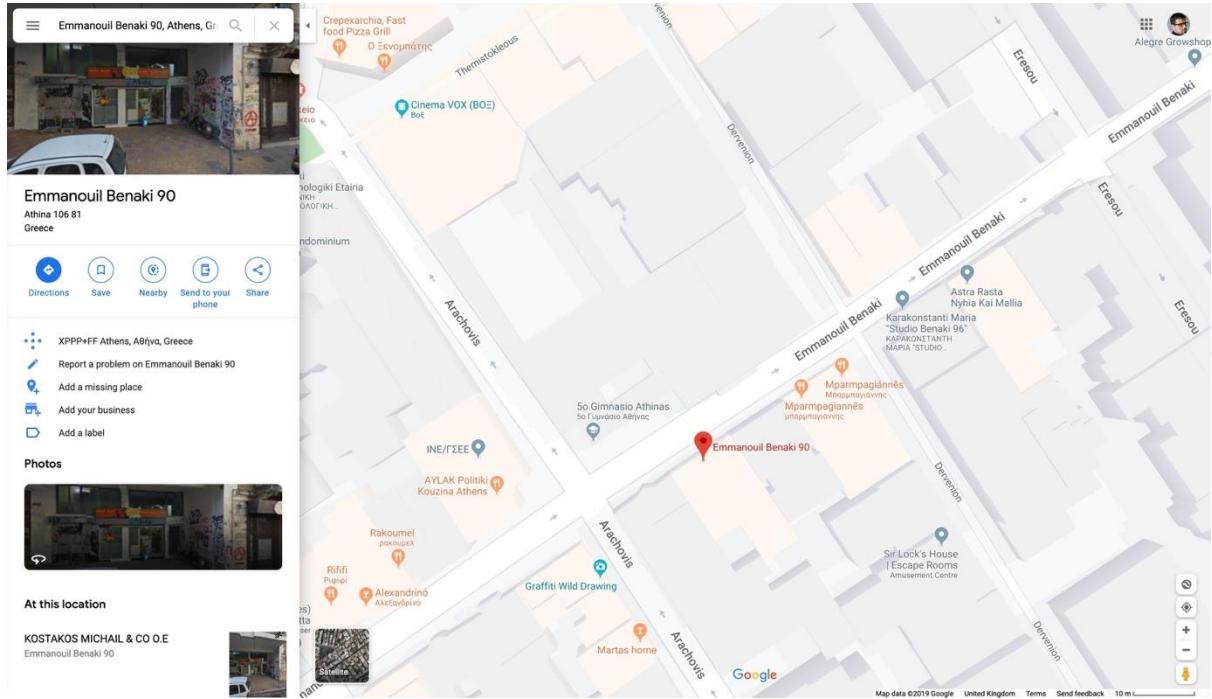


Figure 40 Google Maps, Map view, 2019. Screenshot. Emmanouil Benaki 90 str., 10681, Athens.

Table 1 Details of four periodical recordings

No. of completed projects	Date	Exact Time:	Minutes spent	Number of images
1 st	10 April 2019	17.20 p.m. – 17.23 p.m.	3'	52
2 nd	28 July 2019	19.50 p.m. – 19.55 p.m.	5'	98
3 rd	18 September 2019	22.04 p.m. – 22.08 p.m.	5'	85
4 th	18 December 2019	23.26 p.m. – 23.32 p.m.	6'	138

4.3.2 First recorded layer: April 2019

Massive appropriation of the spot is witnessed. Any available surface (wall, niches, metal box, the building's entrance) accommodated a plethora of visual interventions.



Figure 41 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 1st Recording, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.3.3 Second recorded layer: July 2019

In comparison to the previous recording, the posters have been replaced by more updated ones, and gestural black writing (tagging) extends and unifies the whole composition.



Figure 42 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 2nd Recording, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.3.4 Third recorded layer: September 2019

In comparison to the previous stages, this intervention has interrupted the undefined contour of the activity. We now notice a white painted area around it, formulating a 'vase' that evokes ancient Greek pottery.



Figure 43 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 3rd Recording, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.3.5 Forth recorded layer: December 2019

The new addition of writing and posters disassembled the prior shape of the vase. The form has started to expand again, proceeding to a ‘skin’ behaviour, like healing the former interruption.



Figure 44 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 4th Recording, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.4 Reading the traces that escape our attention: the case of Jonathan Miller

Jonathan Miller, in his book *Nowhere in Particular* (1999), published a great number of pictures of ‘torn posters, rusty trucks, peeling paint’ (Poynor, 2014). Following an invincible urge for these ‘fragments and details’, Miller captured these forms during his travels and everyday life, acting as a recorder and collector for almost 30 years. With only ‘a cheap automatic camera’, Miller sought to read and record ‘pictures of bits’ found in the street. Miller only attempted to show things that may usually escape our attention and interpret them through his presentation in a challenging new way for the viewer (Miller, 1999, p. 3).

Jonathan Miller may not have been an intentional flaneur, but he was a recorder, collector, and reader of ‘negligible things to which one would normally pay no attention at all’ (Miller, 1999, p. 3). In my research, I also act at first as a recorder, collector, and reader, but these traces are formulated in a specific time and place: Athens and the economic crisis, inheriting an identity from this spatiotemporal frame. At an initial stage, they might be seen as equally overlooked as in Miller’s case, yet he perceived them as ‘artwork’ where the ‘haphazard wreckage and decay’ had done the work for him (1999, p. 4). In my case, the Athenian bits become the vehicle for an alternative understanding and recording of the crisis through visuals. Beyond that, I move towards further steps of interpretation and visual exploitation, by adopting them in my printmaking vocabulary, collage, and installation, as well as a methodology of how the contemporary urban trace may add a further visual layer to the discourse of perceiving the crisis and a deeper connection between man and city. As far as the technology used is concerned, Miller (1999, p. 3) relied on ‘a cheap automatic camera’, as I use a simple mobile camera too. What we finally see in *Nowhere in Particular* (1999) is the photographic print of his camera’s ‘fragments and details’ (1999, p. 3) together with Miller’s notebook writings. On the contrary, in my research, the photographic capture is just the beginning of a long process of 3D rebuilding, where numerous detailed images merge into a bigger fragment, finally composing a city spot (wall, column, billboard, city object, etc.). Belonging to a digitalised era in comparison to 1999 (and 30 years before it, during which Miller collected his material), I do not print my details. Considering that for a single project, e.g. one of the four versions of *Billboard under the Bridge* (July 25, 2019), I needed 480 images of details to rebuild a virtual version of the billboard, physical printing is rather impossible. The sample of images below (fig. 45) shows in detail the texture of the billboard, resulting in a natural weathering process. This physical sense will be ‘inherited’ in the recreated 3D model.

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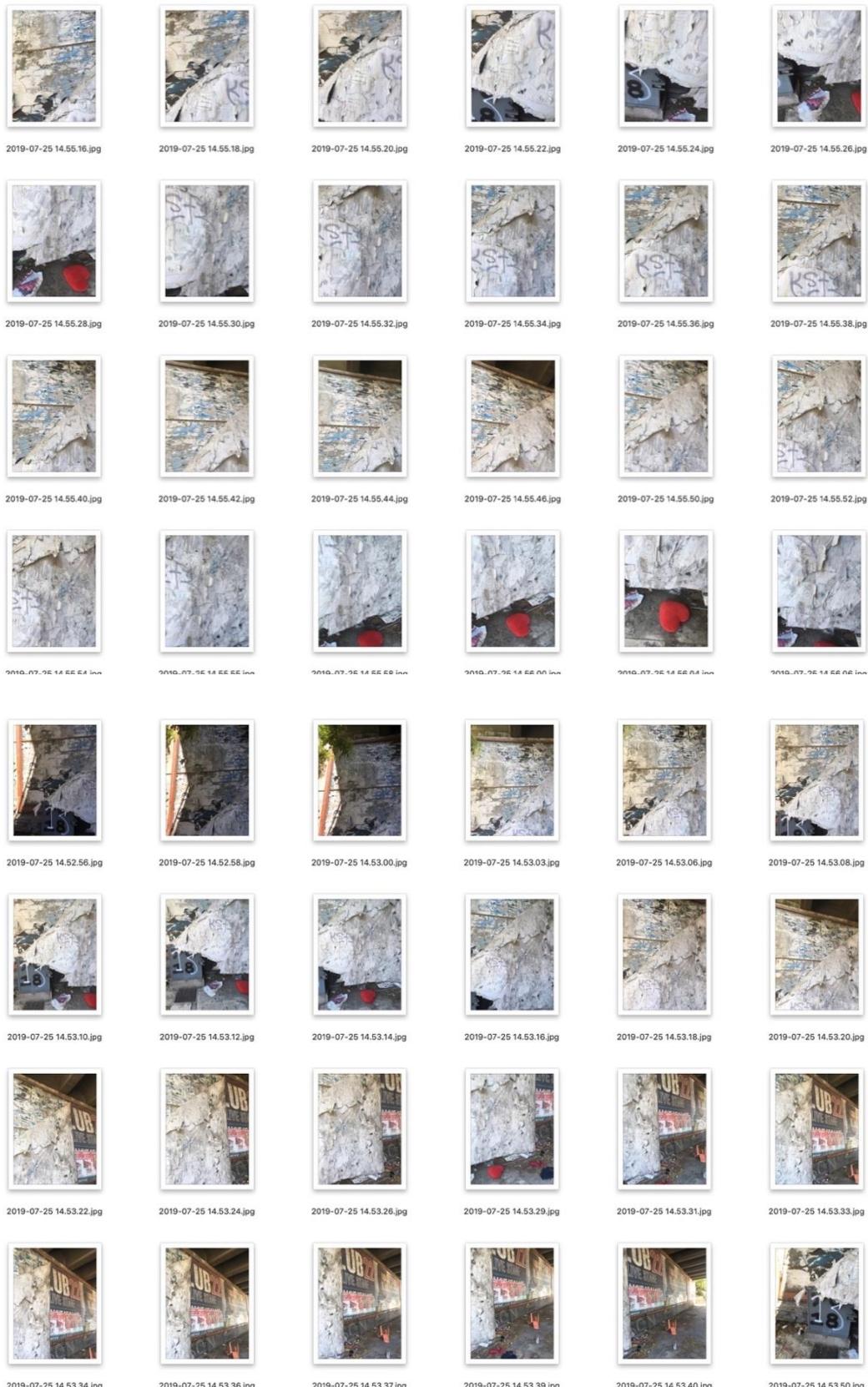


Figure 45 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 40 images in jpeg format for the building up process of a 3D model, 2019. Jpeg files. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.5 Finding significance in the seemingly not important urban trace: The case of Brassai

Brassai (1899–1984) was a flaneur of Paris, a night-time wanderer with a particular interest in the ‘disreputable’ areas of the city. He devoted more than 25 years to collecting several hundred images only using a camera as a vehicle for a meticulous analysis of the urban space. As a nocturnal wanderer, he paid exclusive attention to urban drawings, signs, and scribbles, following a systematic recording process of traces left on the walls of Paris (Ziebinska-Lewandowska, 2016, p. 40). Although Brassai sought the urban traces in a wandering process, as I also do, my research does not focus on ‘disreputable’ areas. Instead, it examines how formerly commercial areas (such as the city centre) and others that were never considered ‘marginal’ were affected by the crisis and gradually displayed signs of impoverishment and degradation over their surfaces. As in Brassai’s case, I also use a simple camera for my charting, but an updated one: the mobile camera.

Brassai (1958) acknowledged the twofold importance of the urban traces: the social dimension, promising further study, and the artistic one: ‘With the language of walls, we are dealing not only with an important social reality never yet studied but also one of the most powerful and authentic expressions of art’. This statement, in comparison to the Athens phenomenon of writing during the crisis, points out the social evidence and potential study but also establishes the artistic dimension, referring to the omnipotence and originality of this artistic expression. In my research, although I recognise collage’s qualities (diversity in media used, tactility, relief, etc.) in the chosen recorded spots, I transcend any notion of ‘proving’ an art dimension to the originally collected realm. For this reason, I do not undertake exclusively a graffiti examination, except in the cases where the latest is part of a wider assemblage of city traces. For the above-mentioned reasons, I indeed recognise the city as a ‘collaged development’, but based on random behaviour rather than art. The ‘artistic’ part may start since I decide to extend the collected images and the urban collaged bearing (layering) into new forms, that I discover and unveil through my research and practice.

Similar to my recording stage, Brassai concentrated on capturing the traces themselves, ‘drawings, signs, and doodles’ (Ziebinska-Lewandowska, 2016, p. 40); graffiti, and close-ups of graffiti carved into and painted onto the walls around the city (Mavliar, 2013) and presented them as isolated pieces. On the contrary, my approach to charting the trace is

different. I gather the details to build up a simulation of a broader fragment: e.g., a wall and its periodic conditions. I thus reject any artistic significance of the detail in favour of the rebuilt virtual fragment. The trace in my investigation is handled as a non-identical, non-representative one; its power of expression lies in its proliferation and contagiousness. That makes Athens important to be examined as the exemplary case of the overwritten city as a whole, going beyond isolated photographic representations (e.g., graffiti), to activate new and original contemporary forms from the recordings and through the later studio practice.

However, Brassai's work introduces an essential component relevant to my research. The isolation of fragments of reality in Brassai's close-up shots evokes a surrealist idea of *dépaysement* ('displacement' or disorientation) that seemed to be like stealing an object from its ordinary context and surrounding reality, thus 'rendering a whole new meaning or interpretation to the object itself' (Mishmash, 2016). My 'stealing' intends to legitimise the omnipresent traces of Athens, often called vandals' activity, as a multifunctional tool: reading and understanding the crisis through it and simultaneously going beyond interpreting it by making a new body of visuals due to it. Besides, Brassai's collected imprints provided a way of reading 'the expression of the city's subconscious', and his book *Graffiti* (1961) urged a growing movement engaging in ethnology and everyday sociology (Artdaily, 2016).

4.6 A testimony to the traces in the precession of the crisis: the case of George Peponis

What distinguishes Peponis's (2008) case in terms of my research is portrayed in his book, *The Walls Belong to the Crowd*. It is structured through almost 300 visuals, unfolding the Athenian imagery since the late 70s, 80s, and 90s, and a particularly extended body of images from 2000 to 2008, namely before the financial crisis burst out later. His work focused especially on capturing slogans and the surrounding area, offering a clear image of the conditions of the walls and surfaces of Athens before the crisis. A small number of graffiti is also included. When I first approached Peponis's work, I was impressed by encountering 'cleaner' realities, as if they depicted another city. While looking at these images, no one would imagine that some years later the surface of the same city would be so saturated that we now discuss a derma's existence (rather than mere verbal or visual marks). Yet, while moving towards 2008, the material gradually changed into more political aphorisms,

witnessing that the signs of the crisis were already present in the cityscape before any official reference to the word ‘crisis’.

Peponis (2008, p. 9) expresses a will to put himself in the slogan writer’s shoes, in their psychology and logic. Sometimes the same slogan is found in other areas of Athens or even in different cities, probably written by different hands; thus, the meaning is accepted by numerous people and replicated. He also states his positionality and role: ‘The writing is a collective work; it belongs to the anonymous and unknown individuals. My work is only collecting [them]’ (2008, p. 9). His decision coincides with my engagement to have no physical involvement with the cityscape; it is left to be developed on its while I observe and document it.

Concerning his positionality, he (2008, p. 10) mentions that if for book writing, someone spends time sitting in their office while thinking, writing, erasing, and re-writing to conclude the final draft, for him this time was double or triple, but devoted in the street, an ‘on foot’ process. He wandered around to discover his subjects, as I also did during my periodical recordings. Although I have embraced writing activities (political slogans), mostly at the outset of the crisis, I was more attracted by the ‘abstracted’ imageries. Namely the saturated appearance of the city, given that since 2008 this has been gradually the Athenian actuality. This means that if my research had taken place before the crisis, it might only include verbal signs, as Peponis did. As far as his methodology is concerned, in the beginning, the process was ‘relaxing’. When he was discovering a slogan, he kept a note on a piece of paper or a packet of cigarettes so that he would return another day to take a picture of it. For a period, he co-worked with a friend of his, John Milis, on more professional capturing and slides. Yet, throughout the years, the process became more experiential and a permanent, scheduled engagement: a walking process of discovering and photographing slogans. He slightly refers to the layering process: when he was returning to a previously detected spot to photograph it, it happened to be whitewashed or covered by a poster; however, he was respecting the posters, and he never tore apart or unglued any of them (2008, p. 10). In my fieldworks, I never detached any aspect of the cityscape. On the contrary, any kind of concealing or vanishing of a former reality that occurred during the time I was in Athens functioned in favour of my project; I sensed the obligation to record it and gather material for a new 3D model. Thereby, leaving history unfolding on its own and uninterrupted. Peponis (2008, p. 11) also realises and stresses this potential of historicity: ‘The slogans reflect their era; they are the fruit of the current events, the conditions, and the circumstances of their time. That is to say, they depict another side of history, one that is written by anonymous individuals’..

This ‘another side of history... [narrated] by the anonymous’ also urged me to collect my initial material and address the reality of the skin of the city.

4.7 The public walls as ‘Live socio-political diaries’: The case of Takis Spyropoulos

If Peponis’s contribution of verbal and visual urban signs can be considered ‘the forbears of the crisis’, Spyropoulos provided those inscriptions that belong to the first years of the crisis.

In his book *X-ARCHIA uncensored, Graffiti from Exarhia Athens 2009–2011* (2013), Takis Spyropoulos displayed collected mottos and graffiti from 2009 to the end of 2012, found in the Exarhia area. Spyropoulos’s (2013, p. 12) photographic interest in writings on the walls started when he moved his studio to Exarhia some years before the publication of his book. He thus began to wander (a flaneur) in the streets and notice the omnipresence of the slogans, like ‘a live broadcast of a “socio-political diary” unravelling every day’. Indeed, during these years (2009–2012) the city became ‘a terrain of conflict and metamorphosis, and its walls were screaming a thousand stories. The city walls are the canvas, and social conditions are the paint in a gallery of untold stories, transforming the walls into social diaries’ (Tsilimpounidi, 2015, p. 18). Spyropoulos (2013) does not claim to be a social researcher or an expert in the art of graffiti. Yet he was seduced by them and wanted to record all those voices that could make Athens’s city centre, Exarhia, the soul of the city. These echoes ‘are the agonizing screams from its deepest core’ (Spyropoulos, 2013).

As I stated before, during the same period I was also collecting slogans, but there was scarcely any graffiti in the same area. Nevertheless, as I have already shown and will carry on displaying in detail in the ‘case studies’ below since I embarked on this recording activity, I had moved away from the mere documentation of individual verbal expressions (slogans) and had already been interested in the broader visual effects of the crisis. The shopfronts and various urban objects, which were absorbed within the wider ‘skin’ of the crisis, had become my subject instead of only isolating the mottos or graffiti. At the beginning of the crisis, I was mostly wandering in Exarhia (the city centre) as well, and my first thesis arguments in December 2018 were chosen from the same area. In my next fieldworks in Athens, however, from April–May 2019, I moved towards a wider perimeter, and not only in the neighbouring areas close to Exarhia. Since July 2019, I have covered and investigated even more areas far from the city centre. Thus, my objective to move from detail (e.g., slogans) to general—the

Photography, 3D scanning and Photogrammetry: Building up the skin immense skin—and furnish evidence of it was practically embodied in my fieldwork methodology.

4.8 Exploring the immensity of the skin of crisis: Case study: Dafni area

In December 2019, for instance, I recorded part of the *Dafni* area, hence far from the city centre. My goal was to examine how extensive the ‘skin’ of the crisis is in other areas and, therefore, to have a wider image of the effects of the crisis within the urban imagery. According to the following map (fig. 46) and getting as a starting point of reference the address of one of my recorded spots in the heart of the city centre (*The Red Post-box*, Akadimias & Themistokleous, Athens 106 78, Greece), the area I wandered and charted is 59 min (4.5 km) or 1 h 6 min (5.1 km) or 1 h 10 min (5.4 km) on foot, far from the initial point (city centre), depending on the way one decides to follow (fig. 46).

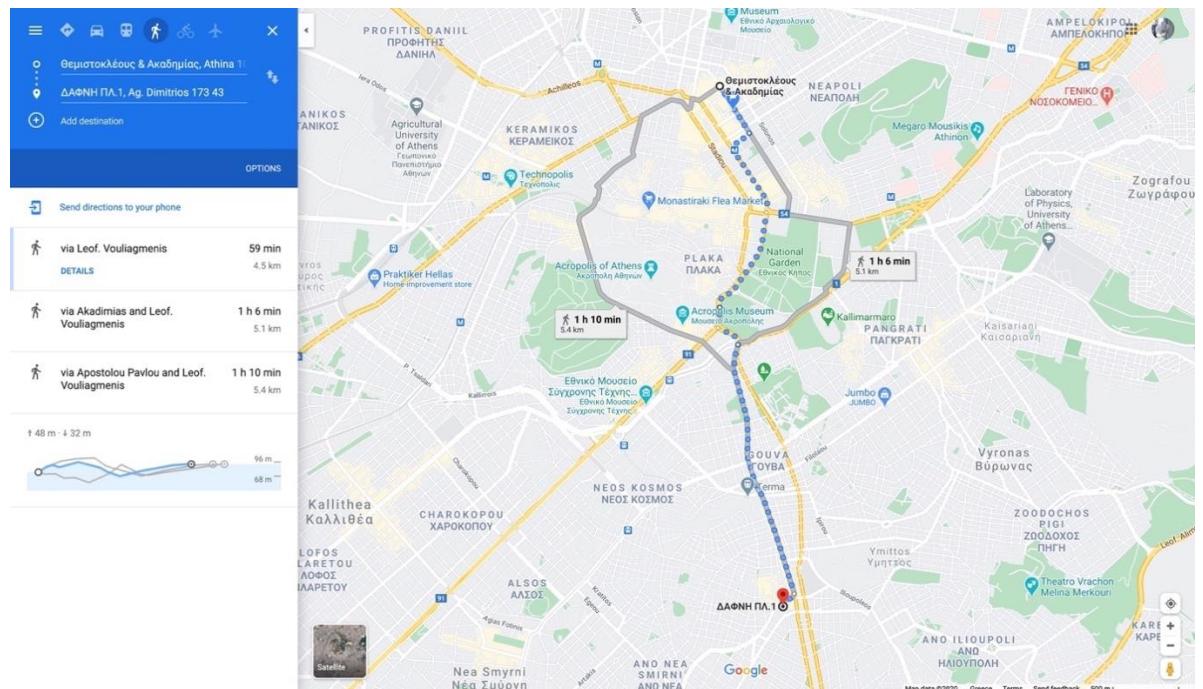


Figure 46 Google Maps, Distance from Akadimias & Themistokleous str. to ‘Dafni’ metro station, 17343, 2019. Screenshot. ©2020 Google.

This recording took place between two metro stations (*Agios Ioannis* and *Dafni*) in two phases: night fieldwork, on December 17 and day fieldwork on December 19, 2019. In the first case, although I started from the main avenue, Vouliagmenis Ave., I also engaged with recordings along smaller streets (e.g., Chios str., Miltiadou str.), and the first parallel avenue to Vouliagmenis, namely Ilioupoleos-Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. Both avenues have been

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considered basic commercial arteries with high traffic, so the crisis' impact would be easier to see. Nonetheless, I also moved around the smaller streets of the area to discover whether the same phenomenon of the 'skin' is also expanded to not-so-commercial streets.

4.8.1 First phase: Night fieldwork: All the projects realised on December 17, 2019, relevant to the Dafni area.

Table 2 First phase: Night fieldwork

No. of completed projects: 10	Scanning processes, Subject area: Dafni area	Date: 17 December 2019	Time spent:	27'	253
No.	Project title	Location	Time	Minutes spent	Number of images
1	Closed Store, Vouliagmenis 169	Vouliagmenis 169, Dafni 172 37	00.21 a.m. – 00.27 a.m.	6'	39
2	Closed Store, Vouliagmenis 148	Vouliagmenis 148, Dafni 172 34	00.28 a.m. – 00.33 a.m.	5'	41
3	'Annie Collage', <i>Closed Store</i>	Imvrou 1 &Vouliagmenis av., Dafni 172 37	00.34 a.m. – 00.36 a.m.	2'	9
4	'IAMOND', Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 164, Dafni 172 35	00.37 a.m. – 00.38 a.m.	1'	8
5	Furniture Closed Store	Chiou 18 &Ilioupoleos, Dafni 172 37	00.43 a.m. – 00.48 a.m.	5'	42
6	Closed Store, Ilioupoleos 116	Ilioupoleos 116, Dafni 172 37	00.48 a.m. – 00.50 a.m.	2'	25

7	'Homeline' Closed Store	Ilioupoleos 124&Gymnastiriou 56, Dafni 172 37	00.51 a.m. – 00.53 a.m.	2'	33
8	Closed Store	EthnikisAntistaseos 60, Dafni 172 37	00.55 a.m. – 00.56 a.m.	1'	17
9	National Academy Of Physical Education	EthnikisAntistaseos 41, Dafni 172 37	00.57 a.m. – 00.58 a.m.	1'	11
10	Miltiadou Corner	Miltiadou 1, Dafni 172 37	00.59 a.m. – 01.01 a.m.	2'	28

Although I will meticulously examine the utilisation of maps (Google Maps), mapping, and map-making potential in the following chapters, I provide below a primary example of how I placed the above-mentioned elements (Table 2) on a Google Map (fig. 47). This way, any verbal information available in table form can be displayed in visuals and on the spot in a virtual perspective.

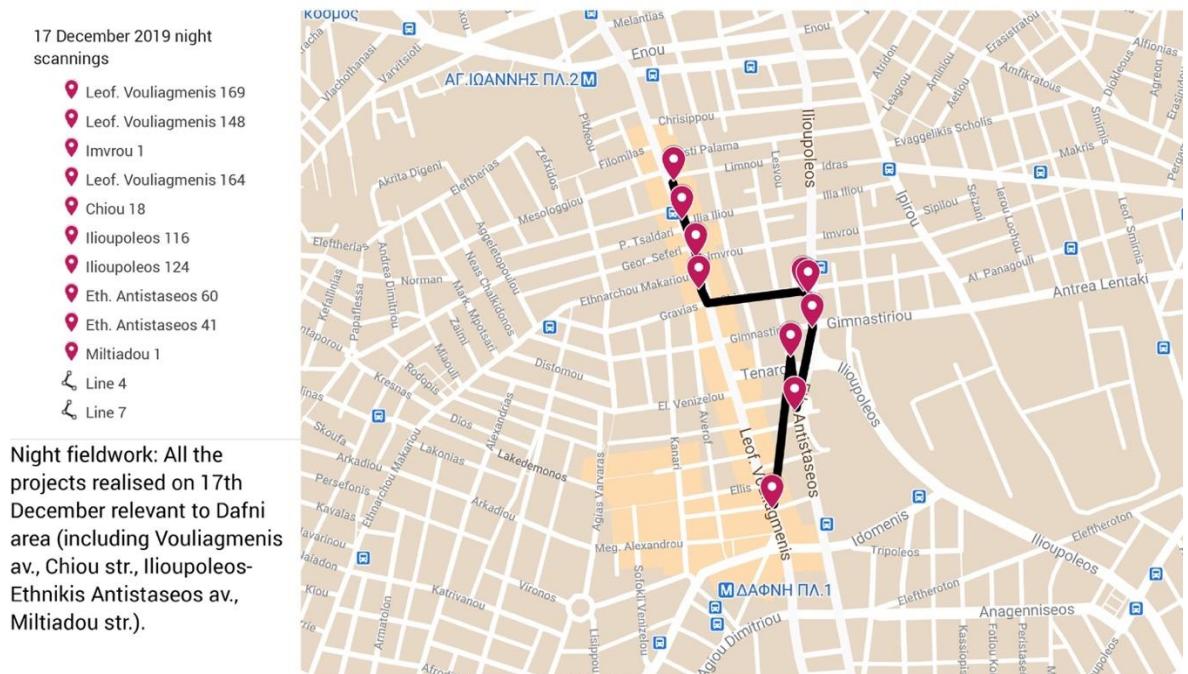


Figure 47 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The map of the scanned projects of the night fieldwork (17/12/2019), 2019. Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Use the following link for virtually visiting the night fieldwork:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1rgwy2Dt7Z4ZCzcxxfqrIqRpOQbd9R3&usp=sharing>

Based on the above map (fig. 47) and the provided link, by opting for ‘Preview’ from the left side of the map (below the title and description), any project can be viewed individually (fig. 48), by clicking on a specific address or the red pin in accordance. All the images below (fig. 49-62) derive from the projects embedded in the map and are still shots of the 3D scanning processes realised for each spot.

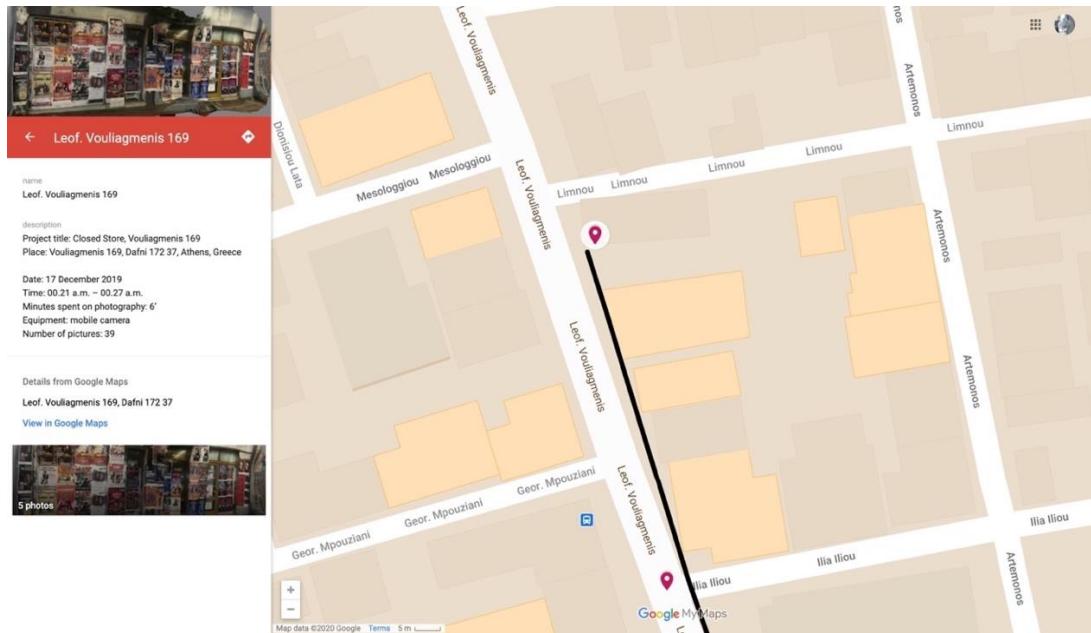


Figure 48 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Preview as a ‘mini gallery’, 2019. Exported Google Map.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.



Figure 49 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Uploaded image in the ‘mini gallery’, 2019. Photogrammetry.

Vouliagmeni 169, Dafni, 172 37. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.



Figure 50 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Uploaded image in the 'mini gallery', 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 169, Dafni, 172 37. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

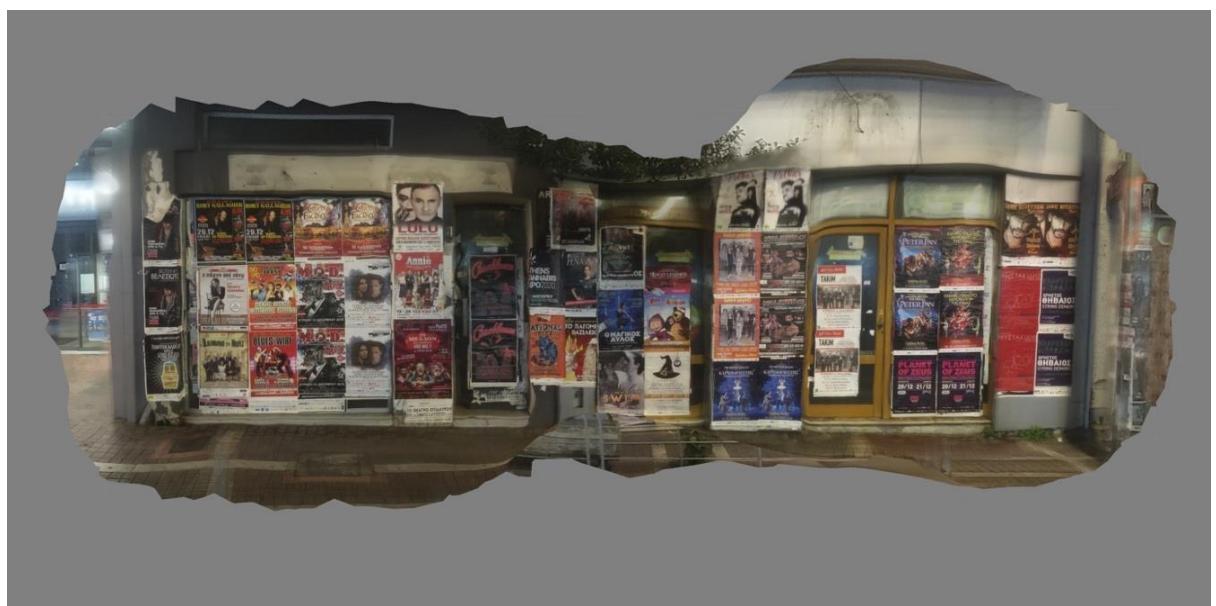


Figure 51 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Three successive closed stores, totally covered with posters, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 169, Dafni, 172 37. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Figure 52 Panagiotis Ferentinos, ¾ left side view of the closed stores., 2019. Photogrammetry.

Vouliagmeni 169, Dafni, 172 37. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 53 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Another closed store, totally covered with posters' layers*, 2019.

Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 148, Dafni, 172 37. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 54 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Detail of the above figure: isolating the posters' part of the project, Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 55 Figure 80 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The showcase and main door of a closed store, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 164, Dafni, 172 37. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 56 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Detail: Isolating the poster area. 'Dense cloud' Photoscan's option.

Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

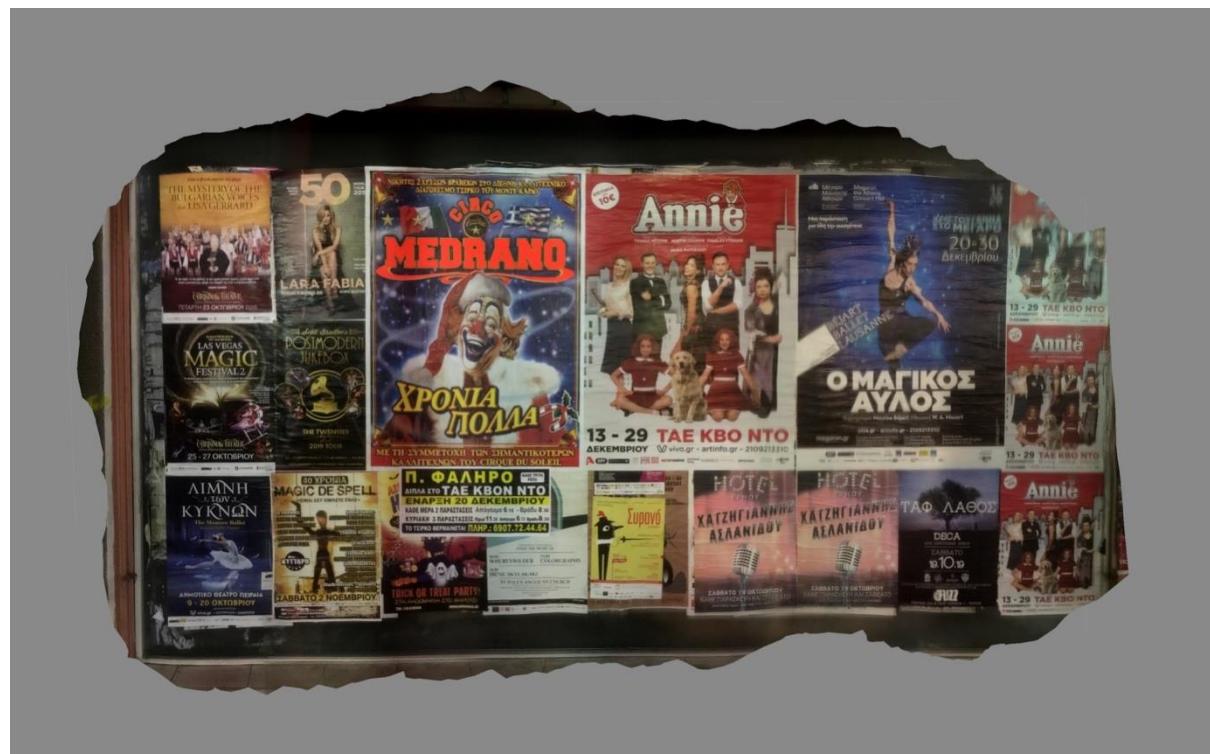


Figure 57 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The showcase of a closed store (Chiou str. side), 2019.

Photogrammetry. Chiou 18 & Ilioupoleos Ave., 17237. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

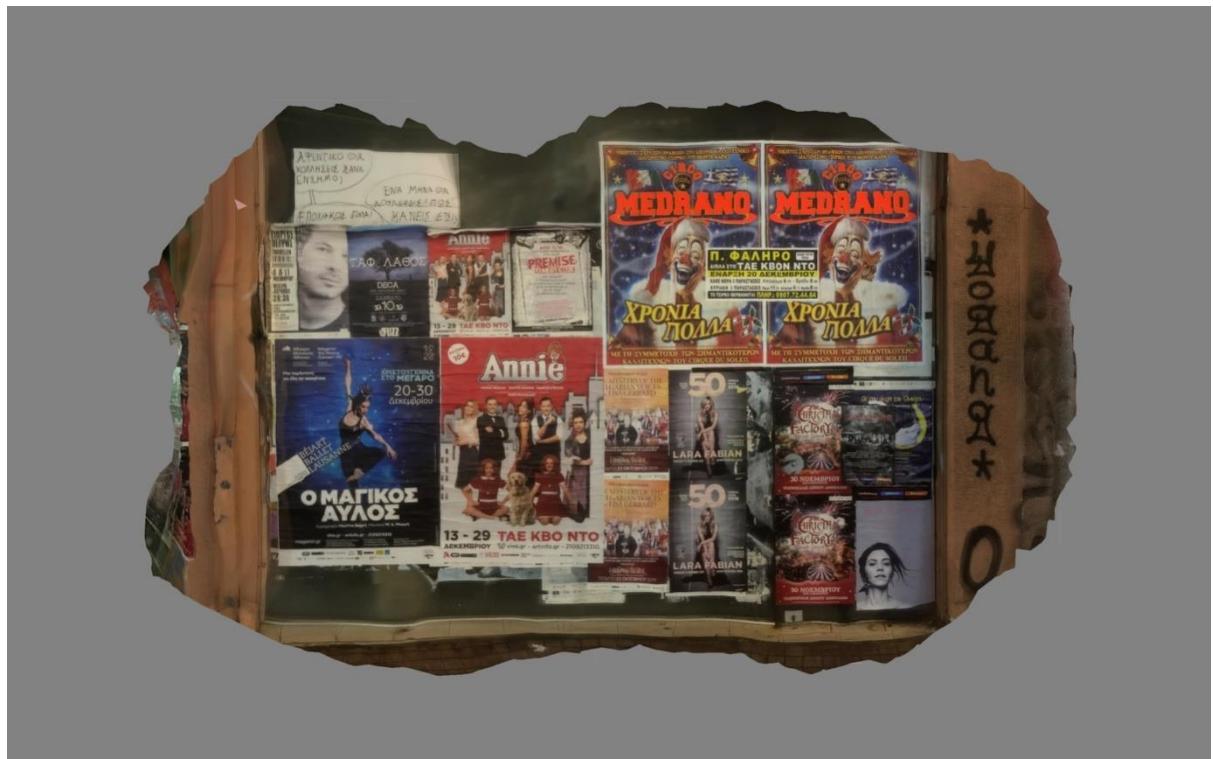


Figure 58 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The showcase of a closed store (Ilioupoleos Ave. side), 2019.*
Photogrammetry. Chiou 18 & Ilioupoleos Ave., 17237. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 59 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The showcase of a closed store, 2019. Photogrammetry.*
Ilioupoleos 116 Ave., 17237. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 60 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The showcase of a closed store*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Ilioupolis 124 Ave., 17237. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 61 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The showcase of a closed store and a house's door (left)*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Ethnikis Antistaseos 60 Ave. 17237. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 62 Panagiotis Ferentinos, National Academy of Physical Education, full of posters and spray-painted writings. Photogrammetry. Ethnikis Antistaseos 41 Ave. 17237. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.8.2 Second phase: Day fieldwork: All the projects realised on December 19, 2019, linked to Vouliagmenis Ave.

This case study examined part of Vouliagmenis Ave. from *Dafni* metro station to *Ag. Ioannis* metro station. Apart from collecting visual data for a later 3D modelling use to represent the skin, I also counted the total number of shop places (both closed and open). I thus had a clear image of the closures I had noticed in the area. In a total of 173 counted stores, 83 were closed. 11–12 years had passed since 2008–09 when the economic crisis started, and almost half of the stores were still closed. A crucial impact of the recession on one of the most commercial avenues of Athens (and not in the city centre). Certainly, my focus on including cases of overwritten or fully poster-covered stores in other areas, such as Vouliagmenis Ave., allowed me to show to what extent the ‘skin’ of the crisis is deployed throughout the city. Selected examples are shown in visuals on the following pages (fig. 67-76).

Time and distance covered during the second phase

According to the following two first Google Maps screenshots (fig. 63-64), 2 minutes are needed from *Dafni* to *Agios Ioannis* tube stations to cover the distance using the tube. On

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the right, we see the starting and ending points of the fieldwork. On the left, there are details of the time spent between the two metro stations and tube transportation (fig. 63). The second map (fig. 64) shows the course from one place to the next traced with the red arrows.

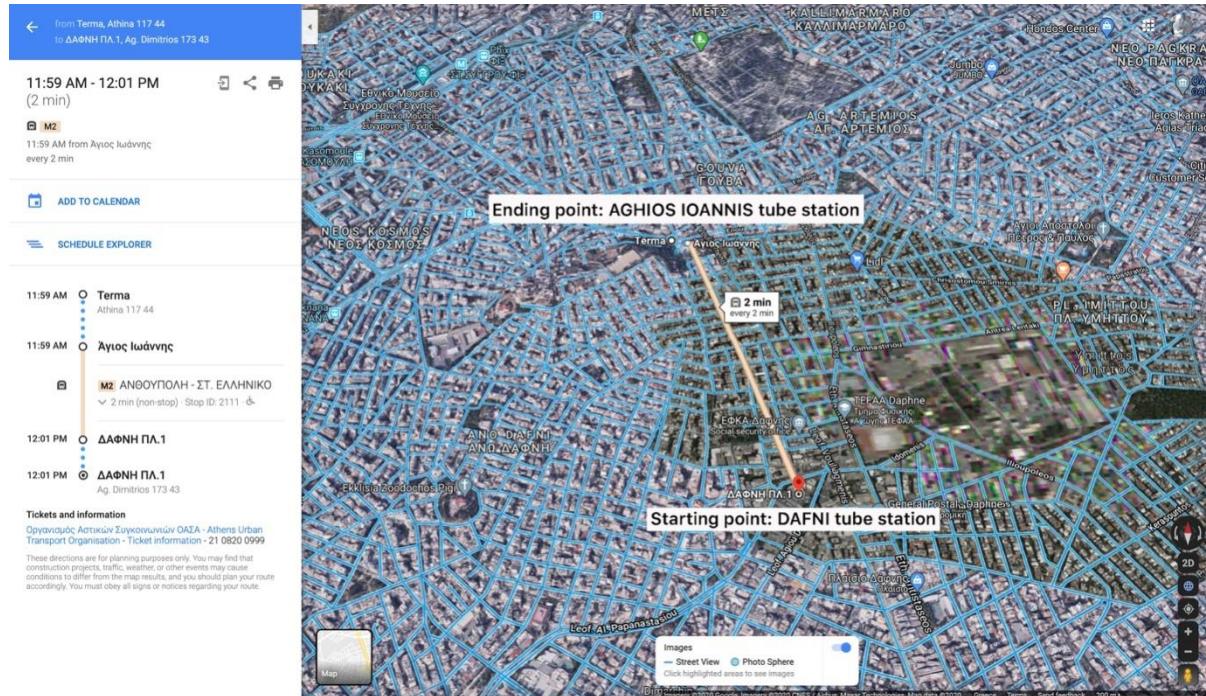


Figure 63 Google Maps, Satellite view, 2019. Screenshot. ©2020 Google.

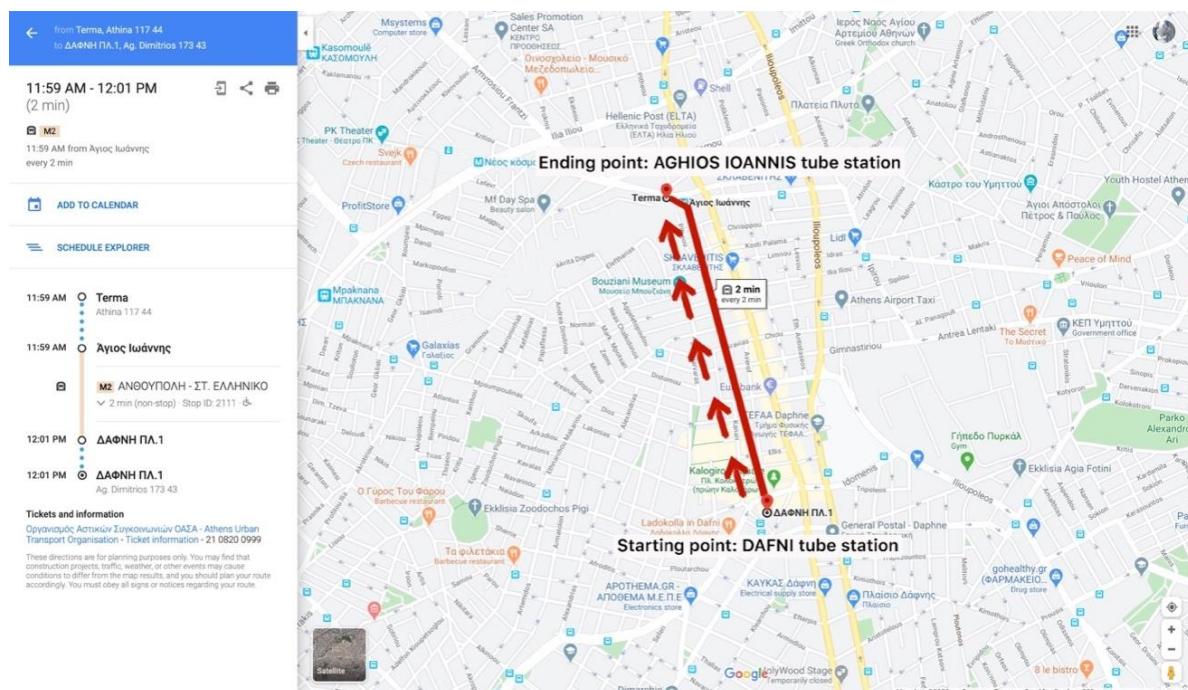


Figure 64 Google Maps, Map view, 2019. Screenshot. ©2020 Google.

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According to the following Google Maps screenshots (fig. 65-66), 14 minutes are needed from *Dafni* to *Agios Ioannis* metro stations to cover 1.0 km on foot. In my day fieldwork, 65' minutes were necessary to cover the area and record 19 of the 83 closed stores. A sample of these recordings will be displayed below (fig. 67-76).

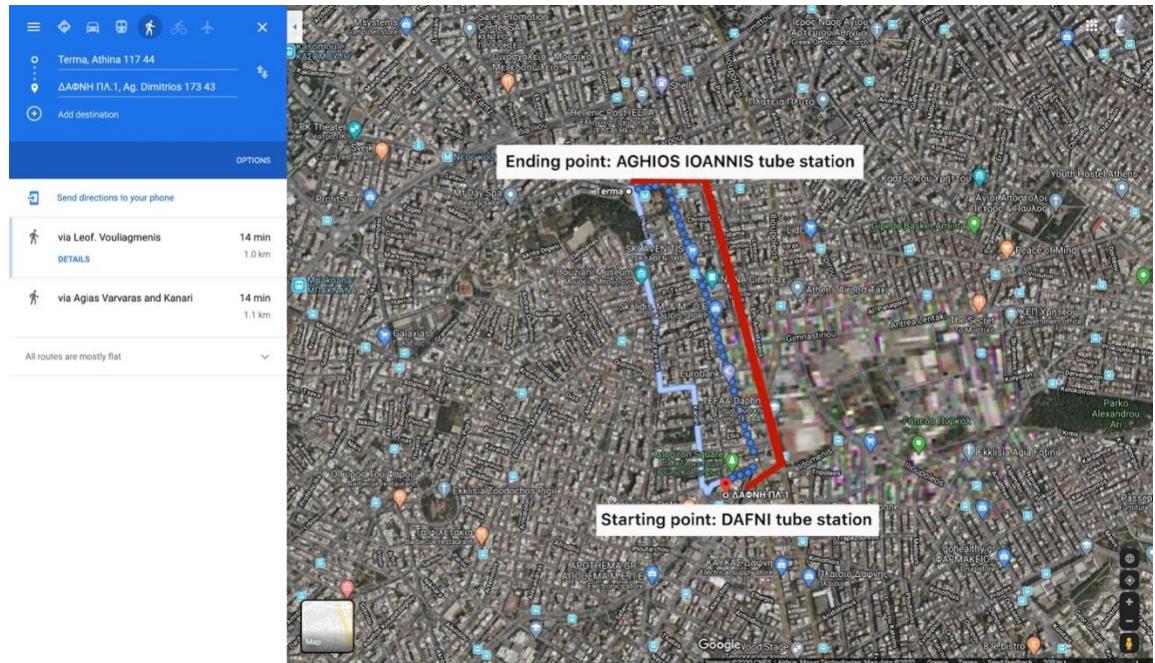


Figure 65 Google Maps, Satellite view, 2019. Screenshot. ©2020 Google.

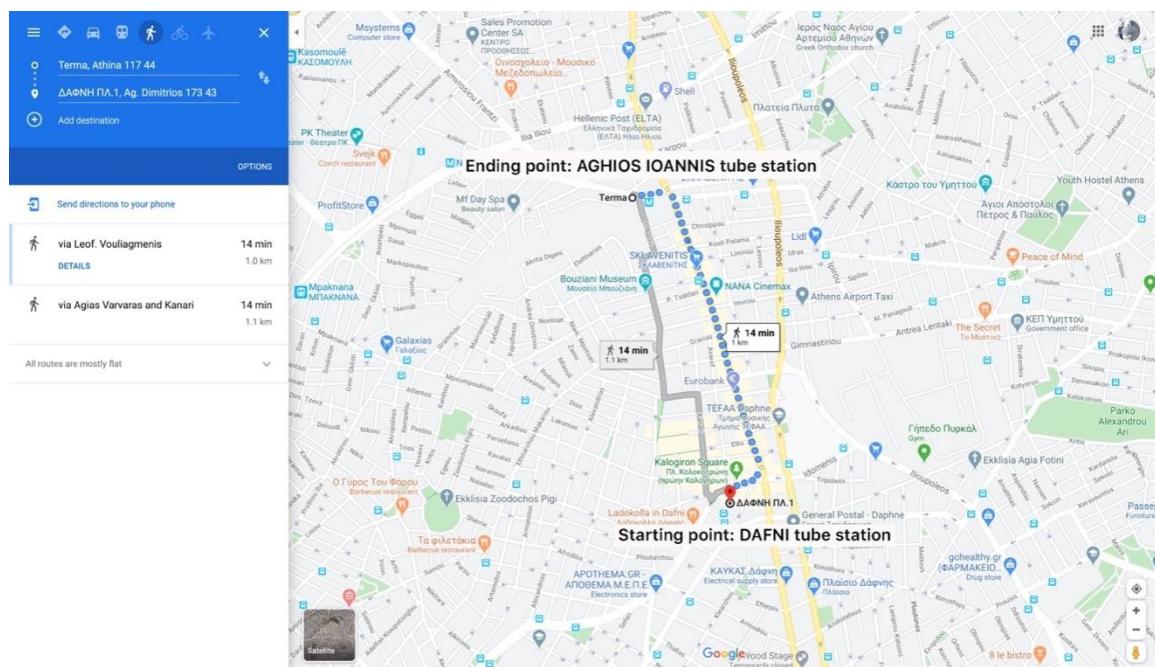


Figure 66 Google Maps, Map view: Two different suggested courses, 2019. Screenshot. ©2020 Google.

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Table 3 Second phase: Day fieldwork

No. of completed project s: 19	Scanning processes, Subject area: Vouliagmenis Av.	Date: 19 December 2019	Time spent: 13.45 p.m. – 14.50 p.m.	65'	1.030 image s
No.	Project title	Location	Time	Min s.	No. of image s
1	The Disappeared Billboard	Ilioupoleos&Tripoleos, Dafni 17237	13.45 p.m. – 13.50 p.m.	5'	18
2	The Closed Shoe Store ‘Anagnostopoulos’	Vouliagmenis&Tripoleos, Dafni 173 43	13.51 p.m. – 14.00 p.m.	9'	168
3	‘Ariston’, the Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 208, Dafni 172 35	14.01 p.m. – 14.06 p.m.	5'	135
4	The ‘Kleious’ Closed Store	Vouliagmenis&Kleious, Dafni 172 35	14.08 p.m. – 14.12 p.m.	5'	104
5	The ‘Giannoulas’ Closed Store	Vouliagmenis&Mikinon, Dafni 172 35	14.13 p.m. – 14.18 p.m.	5'	130
6	Goldsmith Chatzivasiliou&Milonakis, the two Closed Stores	Vouliagmenis 215, Dafni 172 35	14.18 p.m. – 14.19 p.m.	1'	4
7	The ‘Why Not’ Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 192, Dafni 172 35	14.19 p.m. – 14.23 p.m.	4'	94
8	The ‘180 Vouliagmenis’ Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 180, Dafni 172 35	14.24 p.m. – 14.25 p.m.	1'	16
9	The ‘176 Vouliagmenis’ Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 176, Dafni 172 35	14.25 p.m. – 14.27 p.m.	2'	34
10	The ‘197 Vouliagmenis’ Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 197, Dafni 172 35	14.27 p.m. – 14.30 p.m.	4'	69

11	'Reline', The Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 170, Dafni 172 35	14.31 p.m. – 14.32 p.m.	1'	28
12	The Closed Store	Vouliagmenis&Gymnastirio u, Dafni 172 35	14.32 p.m. – 14.32 p.m.	1'	2
13	The 'Georgiadi' Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 170, Dafni 172 35	14.32 p.m. – 14.33 p.m.	2'	26
14	The 'Snow White' Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 164, Dafni 172 35	14.34 p.m. – 14.35 p.m.	2'	27
15	The 'Papabei' Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 183, Dafni 172 35	14.36 p.m. – 14.39 p.m.	3'	30
16	The 'Vouliagmenis 148' Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 148, Dafni 172 34	14.41 p.m. – 14.44 p.m.	3'	70
17	The 'Vouliagmenis 169' Closed Store	Vouliagmenis 169, Dafni 172 37	14.45 p.m. – 14.45 p.m.	1'	3
18	Derelict building	Vouliagmenis&Filomilas 1, Dafni 172 34	14.46 p.m. – 14.47 p.m.	1'	3
19	Home-blankets-homeless	Vouliagmenis&Filomilas 1, Dafni 172 34	14.48 p.m. – 14.50 p.m.	2'	69



Figure 67 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The closed shoe store 'Anagnostopoulos'* (Tripoleos side view), 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis Ave. & Tripoleos str., 17343, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 68 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The closed shoe store 'Anagnostopoulos'* (Vouliagmenis side view), 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis Ave. & Tripoleos str., 17343, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 69 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The closed store 'Ariston' (3/4 left view), 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 208 Ave., 17343, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

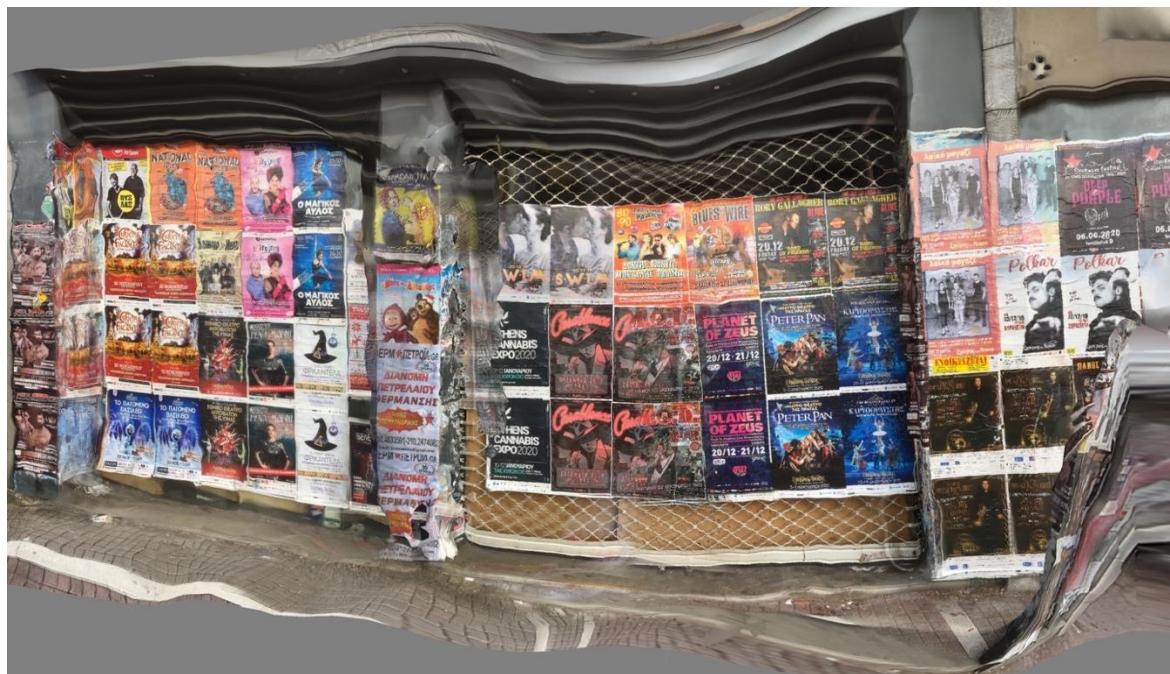


Figure 70 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The closed store 'Ariston' (frontal view), 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 208 Ave., 17235, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 71 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The 'Giannoulas' closed store, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis Ave. & Mikinon str., 17343, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

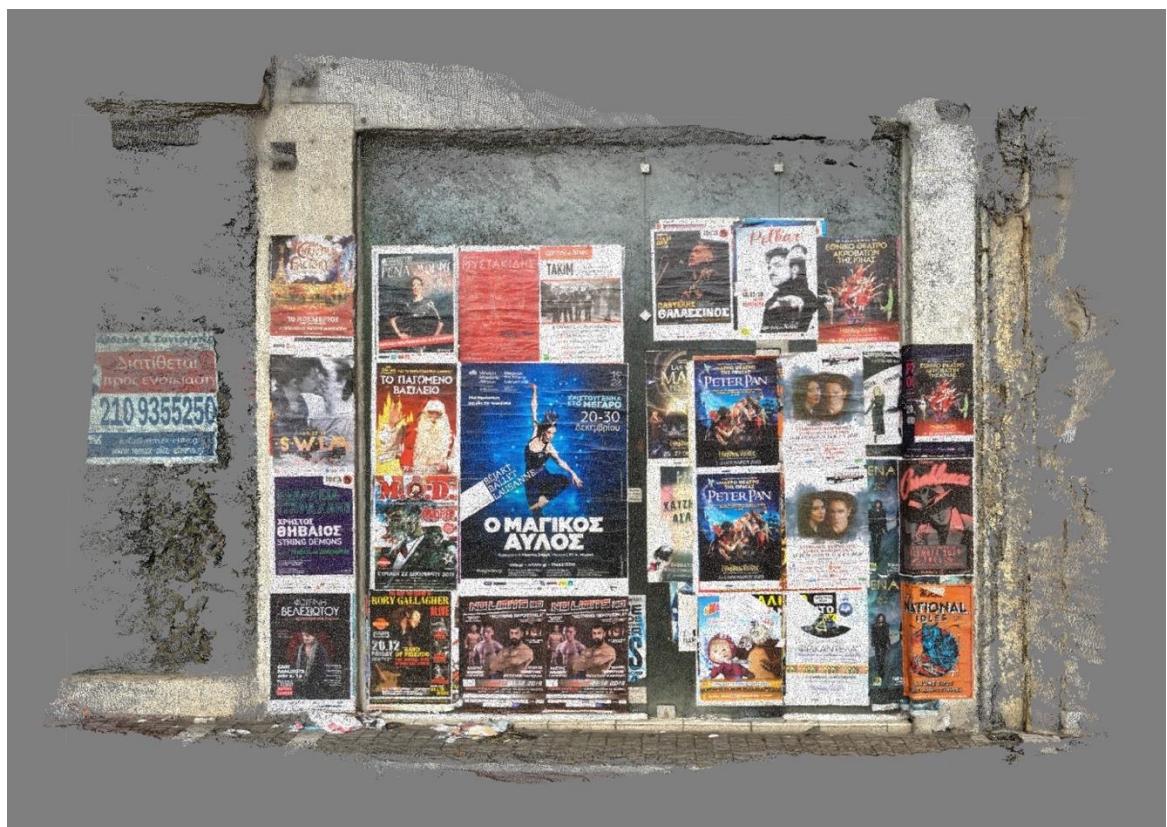


Figure 72 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A closed store: 'Dense cloud' option on Photoscan, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 197 Ave., 17235, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 73 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A closed store: 'Textured' option on Photoscan, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 197 Ave., 17235, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 74 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A closed store (frontal view), 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 148 Ave., 17343, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Figure 75 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *A closed store (3/4 left side view)*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 148 Ave., 17234, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

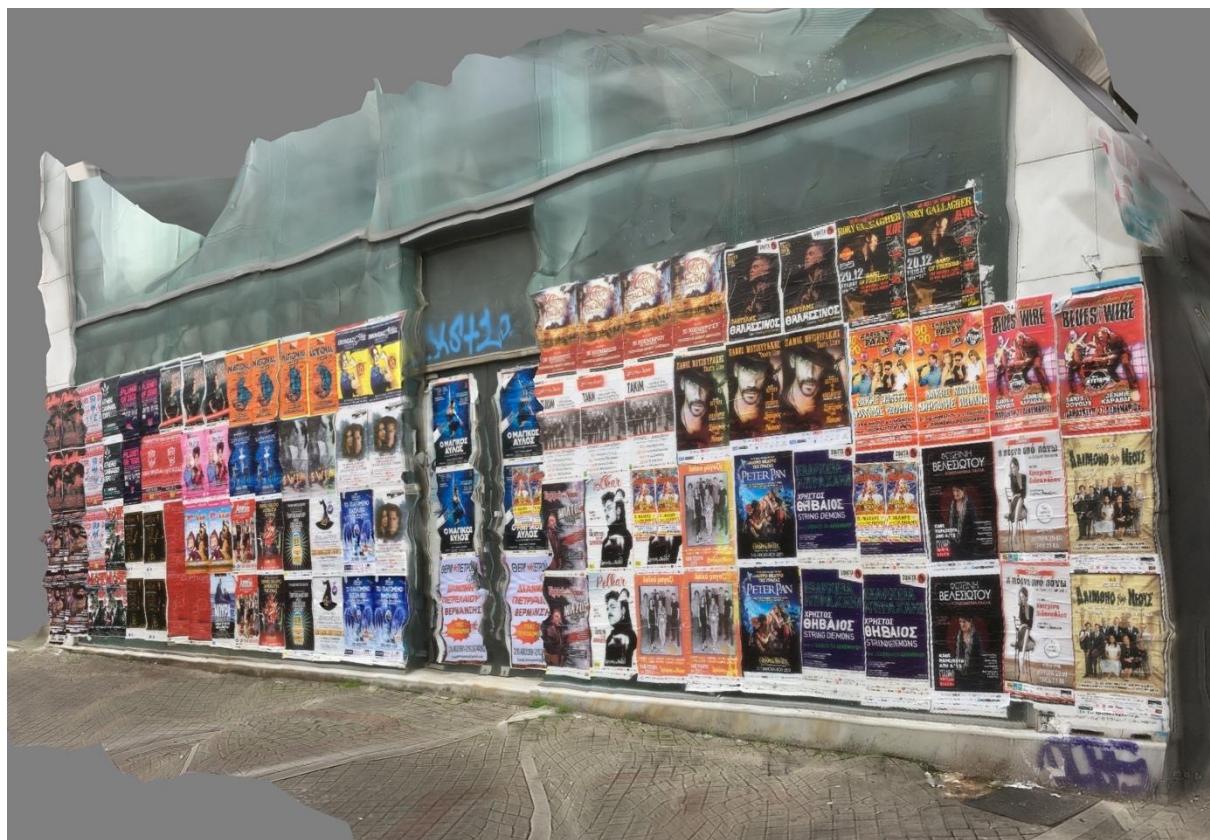


Figure 76 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Close-up: A closed store (3/4 right side view)*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Vouliagmenis 148 Ave., 17234, Dafni. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

4.8.3 **Conclusions of the two phases of fieldwork:**

The decision to move far away from the city centre, to examine how extensive the ‘skin’ of the crisis is in other areas was fruitful. Not only did it provide me with a wider image of the effects of the crisis within the broader urban imagery of Athens, but it also testified that while examining all the elements as a whole (and not exclusively street art and graffiti), the derma’s consistency and continuity are ceaseless. Any available surface is ‘eligible’ for hosting the skin.

By examining wider areas under the term and idea of ‘skin’ (derma), I attempted to go beyond the available body of research (e.g., scientific papers, etc.). The covered field has mostly been focusing on graffiti/street art, seeking them in the city centre, hence in the ‘nest’ of this precise activity. The city centre is indeed saturated with these two components. Yet a term such as ‘skin’ can now include all the elements and discuss wider areas.

With regards to the specific area of fieldwork, the neighbourhoods between the two metro stations (referenced above) have a high density of population, so one would expect to see lively areas where commerce flourishes. Instead, both Vouliagmenis Ave. and Ilioupolis-Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave., as basic commercial arteries with high traffic, demonstrated abandonment, a course of ruins, and dereliction. Hence, the crisis was clearly noticeable.

The skin (particularly based on thick poster layers) was so extensive that most of the front doors of the closed stores were not easily detected. Indeed, its density was almost able to cover multiple stores in a row to such an extent that the former use (shops) of the space was not observable. One could assume that there is only one surface accommodating the skin.

The use of numerous yet the same posters provided a homogeneity of colour, and aesthetics for the area, as well as a source of updated information relevant to what events, shows, etc., took place in the city during that period. Although dominant, the skin’s ever-changing ability suggests an image that will never be the same as soon as the new layer of posters is applied to the former strata. Each specific moment of colours and shapes is temporal and will never be repeated. Even though I referred to homogeneity—obvious when one looks at all the above images (fig. 49-62; 67-76)—each spot reveals a uniqueness. The random choice in number and placement of the posters, as well as the variable use of space, witness distinct compositions from one another. If an imaginary frame could be the shopfront solely, the block, or just the covered area as a fragment, this ‘frame’ would always host purely new compositions. It is essential to stress the randomness associated with time, namely the interval between two interventions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, the

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restrictions on movement and the prohibition of spectacles and events did not allow a renewal of the skin; former realities (as if they were frozen) remained on the spot for months, even years. Yet the posters' faded colours and signs of weathering bore witness to an unreal present. The skin, however, still existed through its aesthetics, reflecting a ruined reality. In the chapter 'The Clean City', I will refer to how the mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyiannis, took advantage of the period of the pandemic to clean up this skin of posters and urban inscriptions.

Finally, opting for wandering in smaller streets demonstrated an equal continuity of the skin and a persistence parallel to the main commercial arteries.

Chapter 5 De-Mapping the Map of Athens in Crisis

5.1 Technology and research methodology

As I have highlighted so far, my research attempts to explore innovative paths for charting the visual evolution of Athens over the course of the economic crisis. Furthermore, it seeks to discover alternative ways to re-read the crisis through the traces and writings that compose the ‘skin’ of the city over its urban surfaces. In this direction, I decided to utilise the continuously accumulated data resulting from my periodical recordings of the Athenian cityscape, as well as the charted courses (wanderings) in imagery maps and find electronic ways to share them publicly. These new maps, based on images of reality, de-map the original map of Athens and emphasised indifferent city spots, making them objects of ‘sightseeing’ in crisis that co-exist within the same locus with the ancient ruins of Greek civilisation. These ‘de-maps’ will be visitable in a virtual environment or, potentially, in physical space.

5.2 De-mapping the spectacle of a myth

To develop my ‘demaps’ and a ‘demapping’ lexicon, I will attempt an evocation of the years before the economic crisis, even before the 2004 Olympic Games that took place in Athens. However, I will proceed to a special discussion on the 2004 Olympics in Athens, providing that they were the ‘event that most recently enlivened the discussion on the role of antiquity in the national imagination’ (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 130), and certainly it preceded the crisis that came after and its impact on this imagination. It is necessary to see how the effort to revive a glorious past relying on the iconography of ancient ruins was supplanted by the recession and its imagery — its contemporary ruins. This examination will point out the matter of Greek identity and how it goes hand in hand with a history of ruins. Through this approach, I will make clear how my research material is suggested as ethnographic evidence of the current era in the context of Greece’s historic continuity.

To proceed to a connection between ruins and identity, we should go back to the dawn of Greece’s independence from the Ottomans, 200 years ago. The emergency of an identity (who we are, what we are, etc.) was linked to the idea of a native, ‘autochthonous’ population. This imperative is termed ‘indigenous Hellenism’, as the narrative of Western

Hellenism was reformulated by Greek intellectuals into a local version to achieve the ‘emancipation of the national narrative’ (Hamilakis, 2007, p. 119). The adoption of a theory of ‘indigenousness’, serving as the vehicle for perceiving the Greek past, coincides with a recent discourse in world archaeology as well (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 132), thus involving the necessity of archaeology and the examination of ruins in questions such as identity. In Greece’s case, antiquities are considered national treasures to be shared by all, but ‘the exclusive and self-sufficient system of state archaeological management institutionalised in the early days of modern Greece, has very successfully entrenched these antiquities as national emblems’ (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 133). This is how Greece’s identity is indisputably connected to an ancient past of ruins, revived, and reformulated for recent purposes of national coherence. This obsessive and manipulated attachment to a precise historical layer of the past, that of antiquity, may make it more difficult to accept a very recent and traumatic layer of ruins, that of the crisis. For this reason, I recognise that my research can be addressed mostly to a future historian for traces and layers of the past (namely the current period). To add to this difficulty, an important factor may concern the time proximity between the 2004 Olympic Games and the outset of the crisis. Nearly 20 years ago, when the Greeks embarked on a journey to live the myth of rejuvenating the Olympic spirit, their visions and hopes were promising another future.

In 1999, during the presentation of the 2004 Olympic Games emblem (a wreath made from an olive tree branch), the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Juan Antonio Samaranch, stressed that Athens and Greece have ‘a greater responsibility, due to their history, to give an extra dimension to the Olympic Games’. He referred to a collaborative work for an Olympiad ‘worthy of Greece and its history, in its of fields culture, sport, and history’. The minister of culture, Elisavet Papazoi (1999), emphasised that ‘we are changing the face of Athens. Athens of 2004 [Olympic Games] will be a new city’. Relying on both speeches, we see that the effort to ‘change the face of Athens’ is relevant to the Olympic Games, history, and culture. That would be the map of contemporary Greece at the outset of the new millennium, based on a myth’s revival, history, and antiquity’s ruins.

Indeed, on the evening of August 13, 2004, the opening ceremony of the 28th Olympic Games in modern times, which took place at the Olympic Stadium in Athens, was welcomed by the international press and the international media with extremely praiseworthy comments and rave reviews. ‘Impressive’, ‘incredible’, ‘unique’, ‘enchanting’, ‘spectacular’, ‘majestic’, and ‘different’ were some of the comments that adorned the front pages of foreign newspapers (Kathimerini.gr, 2004). The main attraction displayed in the

Olympic Stadium was an oversize fragment of the past, a Cycladic head, which surfaced from the water of an artificial lake (Plantzos, 2008, p. 11). Through a laser, this Cycladic figurine was split into a *Kouros* and then into the Hermes of Praxiteles (Alagas, 2021). Three remnants of the past, either abstractive (Cycladic head, the young, manly figure of *Kouros*) or figurative (Hermes), ruins of another era, were indisputably recognised for their heritage value and admired. A long procession of replicas showed the Greek culture through its art; history was experienced as a parade (Plantzos, 2008, p. 11) of a fragmented selection of historical layers of time passing in front of the eyes of the audience. Apart from a colourful representation of copies, another layer of interpretation of this parade could stress the necessity to point out Greece's continuity, 'though with a certain antique bias, a celebration of the all-time-classic Greek ideal, an allusion to some of the eternal Greek values—such as democracy, the theatre, or Christian faith' (Plantzos, 2008, p. 11). The Olympic Games were, therefore, the vehicle for reviving a myth of the past and offering it worldwide in a contemporary context. As Plantzos (2008) argues, the Olympic Games were 'a confirmation of Hellenic identity overall, through a rehearsal of Greek history based on tangible archaeological evidence and its aesthetic appeal, and a reaffirmation of this culture's connection—past, present, and eternal—with the land (and the sea, needless to add) that gave birth to the peerless Hellenic spirit' (p. 11). Yet, how could this myth, mostly based on the historic layer of antiquity, be served as a product for consumption by the tourist audience? The 2005 TV spot of the Greek National Tourism Organization, using the motto *Live your myth in Greece* (2020) promoted the sea, sun, an ancient Greek temple and people enjoying it, a man who is swimming alongside a mermaid, etc. The conveyed message was that when one lands on the Greek ground, they join in the ancient Greek spirit, so the visitors can live a state of fantasy in a myth (Christopoulou, 2014, pp. 267-268). Guy Debord's 'spectacle' of everything that was once directly lived has now been compressed into a mere representation (Debord, [1967] 2014, p. 2). That would be the offered commodity—to map something superficial, a myth. That would be the promising land after the Olympic Games; however, this 'spectacle' would not last for long. Soon after, a tourist would face the crisis' imagery, a new layer of Hellenic identity, and continuity.

Four years after this promised phantasmagoria, in December 2008, as Margaronis (2008) notes, Greek teenagers and twenty-something would riot and protest, stimulated by the murder of a 15-year-old student, Alexandros Grigoropoulos, by the police. They were not the marginalised ones; they were children of the middle class and demonstrated against the government's impotence and corruption. They were outraged by the fake political pledges

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of an education system that could only promise them to work harder than their drained parents. Their life choices were either to become the so-called ‘€700 generation’ or leave abroad, as many other skilled young Greeks were forced to do, instead of enduring a bureaucratic and disorganised state (Margaronis, 2008). The myth was already demapped, as the crisis gradually replaced any layer of the skin of the glorious 2004 Olympic Games and myths. At this point, a new historic moment was about to be inscribed on the public walls. The glorious era was fading away, and the whitewashed walls started accommodating the youth’s anger and people’s demands through massive demonstrations. Handwritten slogans and stencil images were already present; their use was that of ‘alternative political posters’, calling for stimulating the less privileged and urging them to resist (Drakopoulou, 2018, p. 1). During that period, I also started observing, reading, and recording the public walls. I was feeling that the city itself had a voice of resilience and represented its people. Many of the written messages represented me as well while speaking up about what I could not have said publicly, reinforcing a sense of community, telling truths that the mass media would omit, and accusing the youth of destruction, chaos, and disorder. This is the reason that awakened me to wander throughout Athens and document with my digital camera as many inscriptions as possible. I was feeling a moral responsibility and anxiety for the future: who would tell the real story to the ethnographer or the historian of the future, the new generations, if not the real, visualised voices of people who mapped the moment that history was occurring? In 2017, almost 10 years after December 2008, the architect and activist Stavros Stavrides (Professor of Architectural Design and Theory, School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens) published an article where, from the very subtitle, he wondered about the early uprising stencil images in Athens of December 2008: ‘Writing or inventing traces of the future’? Are the stencilled images of December 2008 simple writings that have to be treated as such, namely as bearers of a transient meaning? Or did these traces finally ‘invent’ the future, so that today, after 14 years, we can consider them as early ‘prophets’ of the forthcoming crisis? If these marks were prophetic, then the significance of their recording certainly has an ethnographic dimension for the historian of the future. The prominence given to stress the existence of the skin and archive may be seen as meaningless nowadays, yet it is important for future reconsideration of contemporary Greek identity and continuity.

The emergency of continuity for possessing an identity, through presenting visual evidence of a nation’s historical layers over the centuries, can show the potential of my research to contribute a new layer [that of the current era], provided that past and present are placed

hand in hand in the same city. The ruins of the crisis can easily be encountered when one visits Athens, probably to admire its former layers (antiquity, etc.). My prior reference to the Cycladic head of the Olympic show, for example, ‘[that] was a hyper-blown-up copy of an actual ancient artefact, [is] one of the most treasured masterpieces exhibited at the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens’ (Plantzos, 2008, p. 11), which is in an area of the city centre where contemporary marks, writings, and traces are dominant. If we juxtapose the two temporal layers, the only difference is that the figurine is protected behind the glass case of a sterile environment (a museum), while the others are outside and invade one’s field of vision unconsciously. They co-exist and both produce a reality instead of a myth, apart from any attempt to offer only one (the Cycladic head) to the tourist gaze.

An effort to seduce a foreign public with myths—the locals would still struggle to subsist—would carry on for years, even when the recession was getting deeper and deeper. Amid the crisis, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Greek tourism, the World Travel Market (WTM) 2014 presented a video about ‘Gods, Myths, and Heroes’. It was referring to the fact that ‘every Greek destination is the birthplace of an ancient god; every place in our country hides a myth, a magical story, the energy of which is kept alive until today! Let’s discover it...’ (Visit Greece, 2014). According to Roland Barthes (2009), mythmaking is the fruit of distortion: ‘Myth hides nothing; its function is to distort, not to make disappear’ (p. 121). The crisis would not disappear by promoting tourists ‘hidden myths’ and ‘magical stories’. Any Greek destination, and mostly Athens, would not unveil ‘the birthplace of an ancient god’, but the vanished spectacle, the closed stores, and the skin of posters and writings that covered the city. Any effort to map a ‘destination of gods’ was de-mapped on its own; the crisis brought to light its sightseeing: its ‘derma’, the skin of the crisis. In response to those artificial myths and their ‘spectacle’, I decided to make my maps, a body of counter-maps or ‘de-maps’ facing the real instead of manipulated myths. I could thus offer an aspect of reality to the tourist gaze.

This decision will attempt to make more visible or change the way of seeing (or receiving) Athens’ new historic layer (crisis) or go against the official tourist industry norms. The ‘tourist gaze’ is the vehicle for controlling and arranging [namely, a nuance of manipulation] the way that tourists see both places and their people through a selective process decided by the tourism industry (Smith, MacLeod and Robertson, 2010, p. 175). The tourist gaze ‘is directed to features of landscape and townscape that separate them from everyday experience’ (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 4). Thus, a tourist might spend some days in Athens without having even an impression of what a crisis is or what the stains and smudges in a

quaint alphabet for them (the Greek) may mean. The tourist industry's selectiveness suggests antiquities, myths, gods, and mermaids. Therefore, there is still room to show the ruins of the crisis, to map them visually, and to make them visitable. In my thesis, I have referred to numerous scholars who have been engaged in publishing papers about Athens and its imagery. Yet, a visual material, in the form of a map, for instance, is more accessible than a paper, speaking directly to the optic potential. The tourist gaze makes people take their time, and the subject of seeing becomes objectified; it tends to be captured 'through photographs, postcards, films, models, and so on' (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 4). The idea of sharing my models, maps, and visual material, namely, could map and guide a new tourist gaze, that of better understanding the current city they visit, beyond selling myths. Through my practice, it only remained to chart this de-mapped myth spectacle.

My maps engaged with this de-mapping where, instead of showing antiquity ruins and ancient sightseeing, I embedded and made accessible various city spots, urban 'objects', surfaces, and walls; namely, the sightseen of anti-spectacle. At last, this is what an Athens inhabitant or a visitor would encounter unconsciously while coming to see the 'promised mapped objects' from the Greek National Tourism Organization since the beginning of the crisis. My maps could thus be the 'de-mapped maps', or counter-maps, of the promised spectacle. Before developing my methodology on de-maps, I will proceed to discuss my main tool for this purpose, Google Maps. At first, I will refer to it as a versatile research tool applied to a broad area of scientific disciplines; hence, one could understand that alternative use of this tool, in my case, may offer new insights into these fields. Apart from the advantages of utilising Google Maps, I will also note the disadvantages relevant to Google's visual sovereignty and its right to our cities' imageries and their skins. My perspective will be unfolded through visuals, showing my maps and their hosted material, as well as a relevant discussion on my decision to use Google Maps and my response to its strategy to represent the skin of the city.

5.3 Google Maps as a versatile tool for research and practice

In recent years, technological advancements have revolutionised the way we conduct research and engage in professional practices across various domains. One such technological marvel that has transformed the landscape of navigation and geographic information is Google Maps (Google Inc., n.d.). As a widely adopted and accessible web-

based mapping service, Google Maps has gained significant attention and recognition among common people, simply passing-by and living their everyday lives, as well as researchers of many disciplines. For example, in the health sciences, geographical information systems such as Google Maps provide a platform for disease surveillance and visualisation of data (Foody, 2008, pp. 223-224). These applications have seen a rise in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the example of Google Maps being transformed, from a seemingly 'objective' mapping layer digitally superimposed on the real world, to a disease mapping platform, indicating levels of infection in several areas of the world, and facilitating in people's decision making as to what hospital to visit, which testing site to go too, etc. (Gekker, 2023, pp. 194-195; Banerjee, 2020). By harnessing the extensive dataset and functionalities offered by Google Maps, researchers as well as people going about their everyday life (passers-by) can unlock new insights, facilitate decision-making processes, and optimize their professional activities.

5.3.1 Google Maps as a tool for research

To contextualize the significance of Google Maps as a research and practice tool, it is crucial to understand its core features and underlying technologies. Google Maps, developed by Google Inc., is a web-based mapping service that provides interactive and dynamic maps, satellite imagery, street views, and real-time traffic information. It utilises a combination of technologies, including satellite imagery, geospatial data, global positioning systems (GPS), and crowd-sourced information, to deliver precise and up-to-date geographical information on a global scale. Google Maps has the potential to offer a range of features that enable researchers and practitioners to analyse, visualise, and model geospatial data. These features could include route planning, geocoding, satellite imagery, street view, 3D mapping, traffic and route time estimation, and public transport information. By harnessing these functionalities, researchers and practitioners can address a wide array of challenges and questions, such as urban planning, transportation analysis, environmental monitoring, disaster management, social sciences, and business intelligence.

The integration of Google Maps in research and practice brings forth several advantages. Firstly, it provides researchers and practitioners with a user-friendly and easily accessible platform to visualise and interact with geographic information, regardless of their technical expertise. Secondly, the vast amount of geospatial data available through Google Maps enables researchers to analyse and compare diverse variables at different scales, supporting evidence-based decision-making processes. Lastly, the real-time and dynamic nature of

Google Maps data allows for the monitoring and assessment of changes and trends in various geographic phenomena. Several new disciplines have emerged using these features, such as medical geography, and within it, health geography (Meade and Emch, 2010), and others have been using it extensively to promote the quality of research in already advanced fields, such as social science and criminology (Vandeviver, 2014, pp. 2-4).

5.3.2 3D representations and machine created-images vs. ‘collage’.

Neural rendering is a technique that utilises deep learning algorithms to generate realistic and high-quality images or 3D representations from incomplete or low-quality input data. It leverages the power of neural networks to fill in missing information and enhance visual details, resulting in visually appealing and realistic renderings. Auto-generated 3D imagery, on the other hand, refers to the process of automatically creating three-dimensional representations of real-world objects, structures, and landscapes using computer algorithms. These algorithms analyze various data sources, such as aerial imagery, satellite imagery, and street-level imagery, to reconstruct the geometry and appearance of the objects in three-dimensional space. Google Maps employs neural rendering and auto-generated 3D imaging techniques to enhance the visual quality and realism of its maps and live 3D images. By combining vast amounts of geospatial data, including satellite imagery and street-level imagery, with advanced computer vision and deep learning algorithms, Google Maps can create detailed and immersive 3D representations of the physical environment (Szeliski, 2022, pp. 681-685). With the use of photogrammetry, Google Maps can access particular information from multiple images, captured in different images, from different angles and positions to reconstruct the three-dimensional geometry of buildings, landmarks, and other structures. Neural rendering techniques are then applied, to enhance the visual appearance of these 3D models, ensuring a more realistic and visually appealing representation (Bruno and Roncella, 2019, pp. 181-182).

Furthermore, Google Maps leverages the power of machine learning to automatically generate 3D models of buildings and structures in real time. By analysing vast amounts of imagery and data, the algorithms can recognise and classify different objects, extract their dimensions and shapes, and generate accurate 3D models on the fly. This enables Google Maps to provide users with dynamic and up-to-date 3D imagery of various locations, enhancing the overall mapping experience. The integration of neural rendering and auto-generated 3D imagery in Google Maps enhances the realism and visual fidelity of the maps, allowing users to explore and navigate the digital representation of the physical world with

a greater sense of immersion and accuracy. It enables detailed 3D visualisation of urban landscapes, landmarks, and terrain, providing users with a more comprehensive understanding of their surroundings. It is worth noting that the specific techniques and algorithms employed by Google Maps may evolve as advancements are made in the field of computer vision, deep learning, and image processing.

5.3.3 Limitations and distortion of the ‘derma’

This process appears to be quite similar to collaging techniques, with layers upon layers being imposed on maps, and images being ripped and put together, in the artist’s eye. The quality of the version of the ‘derma’ created by machine techniques appears distorted, and it also raises questions on the said quality. Researchers argue that spatial technologies are never an adequate depiction of the ‘real’ world, which would constitute its ‘derma’. Kitchin et al. (2013, pp. 481-487) argue that map creation or cartography by any means, must be understood first through the lens of relational contexts. On that matter, they suggest that cartographic epistemology needs to be re-designed and examined through the lens of other disciplines and methods, such as ethnography, ethnomethodology, and methods, such as participant observation, genealogical study, etc. This process the researchers put up for investigation suggests that the fluctuations of the ever-changing ‘derma’ cannot be captured by simple machine-put-together images. All items in our environment appear, according to the researchers, to be part of an ever-changing state of flux that derives from an ontogenetic process of ‘always-becoming’. And the question arises: does the ‘derma’ of moments that Google Maps shows in the 3D ‘immersive view’ renders appear adequately put together and filled in the blanks, a true capture of the fluctuating ‘derma’? Other researchers are even more sceptical, conceptualising the layers of Google Maps presented reality as a form of ‘weaponised skeuomorphism’ (Bratton, 2015, p. 224), that can affect the public’s understanding of reality and options around them. For example, Gekker (2023, pp. 194-195; 211-212) mentions that the layer for the Covid-19 pandemic, with all its guidance provided facilitated people’s decisions on crucial matters on their health and exemplified the fluctuations of ‘derma’ mentioned above, only existed for two years, before it got removed in September 2022.

Thoughts of this tool being weaponised bring forth thoughts of a ‘Big Brother’ regime referred to in the literature (George Orwell’s book ‘1984’). The detailed geospatial information and real-time tracking capabilities offered by Google Maps and other such tools can grant governments unprecedented surveillance powers, enabling the monitoring and

tracking of individuals' movements and activities on a mass scale. In the wrong hands, this level of surveillance could be used to suppress dissent, violate privacy rights, and control the population. Moreover, the centralised nature of such online mapping tools means that control over access to information rests in the hands of a single entity, which raises concerns about data manipulation, censorship, and the potential for misuse of collected data. And yet, as argued above, these tools could never be descriptive of the fluctuating environment and may present falsely rendered, distorted, inadequately put-together, images of reality that lack the concept of contextual relations. A snake's 'derma' that got deformed the exact moment it was shed, but also offers so much detail to the species that shed it (biological, cultural, medical, ethnographic etc), that mere pictures of it cannot begin to identify. Below, I will introduce my demaps through visuals, and then I will continue with further discussion on the use of Google Maps and the contributions of this decision.

5.4 The De-mapped maps

I display below (de-)maps of my first three periodical fieldworks in Athens: December 2008 (fig. 77-78), April (fig. 79-80), and July (fig. 81-84) 2019. To make the 'de-maps', I relied on a widely used navigation tool, Google Maps, that can provide easier access and use for someone who is accustomed to handling it. Besides, the utilisation of a well-known map, both as a research tool and the means to depict the charted courses of anti-spectacle sights, may contribute to the diversity of a normally used tool for everyday life streetscape guidance.

Each demap below (fig. 77-84) provides spatiotemporal information: a title on top, 'Scanning the city of Anti-Spectacle' (Athens), and the period during which the fieldwork took place (e.g., December 2018). On the left, the red pins indicate the addresses of the city spots I recorded. I preferred to include the specific addresses rather than invented titles so that one would know where each of them is in the city. The pin on top always denotes the first recorded spot, and the following pins represent the second, the third, and so on. Below the pins, there is a brief description of each fieldwork relevant to the period, the scanning dates, and the number of projects completed. On the right, the pins show the visual location of each spot, whereas a black line implies the course followed and connects them like a recommended promenade.

Having accomplished at least 5–6 periodical fieldworks and recordings in the Athens cityscape (December 2018–December 2019), I intend to continue collecting photographic

data periodically even after the end of this PhD project. I will thus proceed with producing new maps or maps showing the evolution of the current ones. These maps (as well as the current maps shown below) can be either distributed electronically or displayed individually as large-scale mural prints, including photographic data and images of the 3D scanned processes that unveil visual data of each space/spot/surface, etc. Indicative examples of such prints can be seen in Appendix 1.

Scanning the city of Anti-spectacle: December 2018

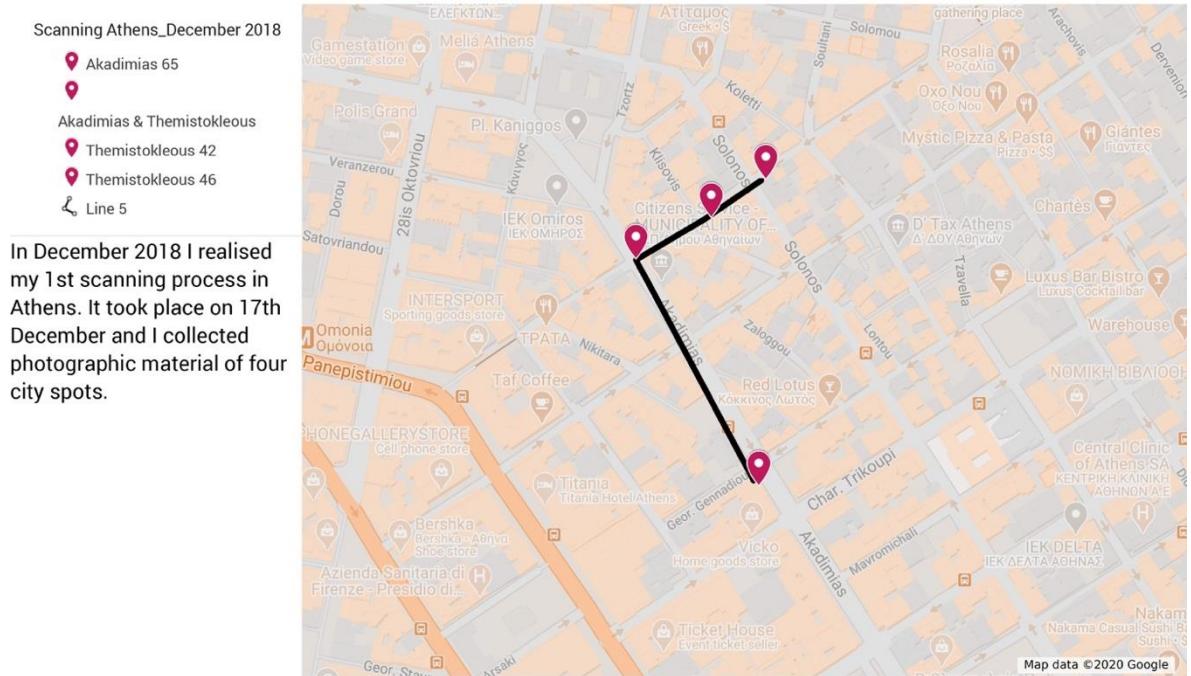


Figure 77 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 1st periodical scanning, 2018. Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

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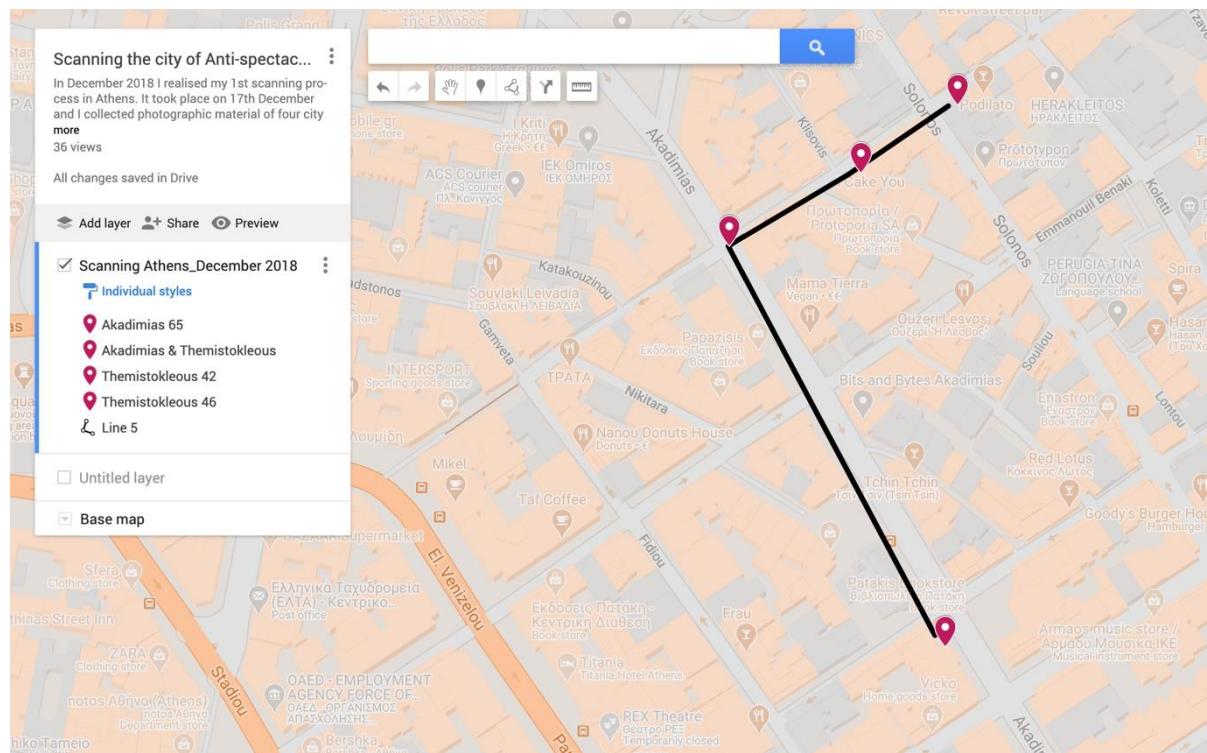


Figure 78 Panagiotis Ferentinos, the process of making the map, 2018. Exported Google Maps.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Scanning the city of Anti-spectacle_10 April 2019 (1st April scanning)

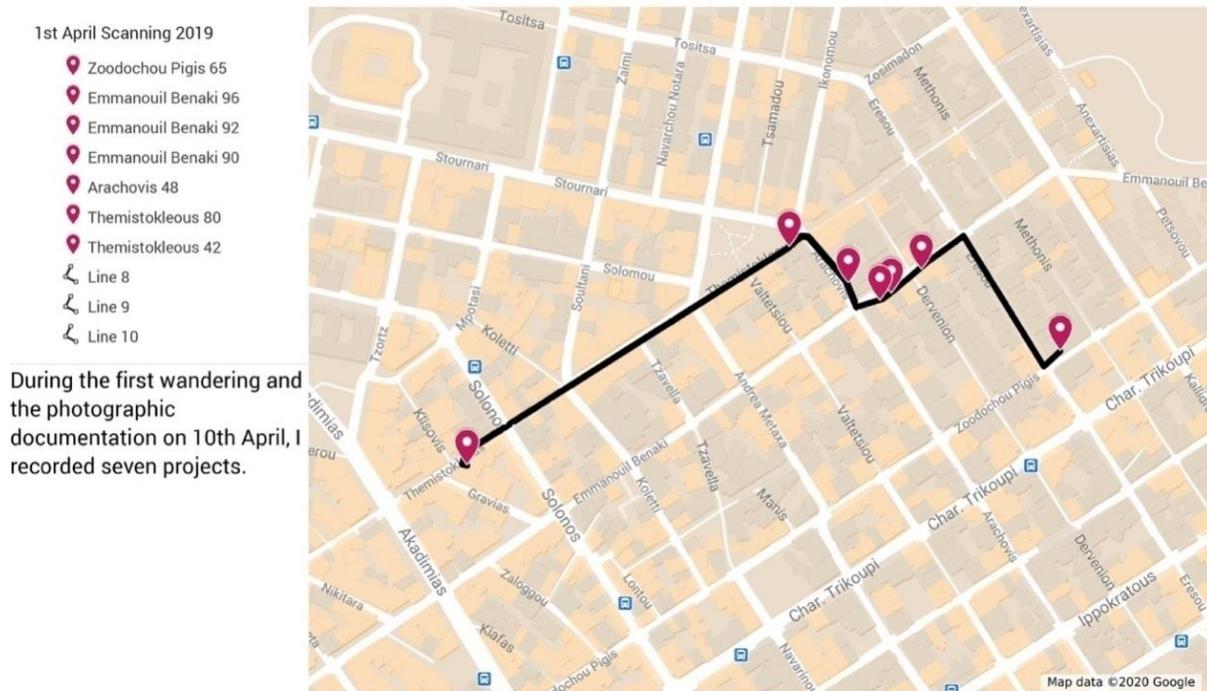


Figure 79 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 2nd periodical scanning, 2019. Exported Google Map.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Scanning the city of Anti-spectacle: April 2019

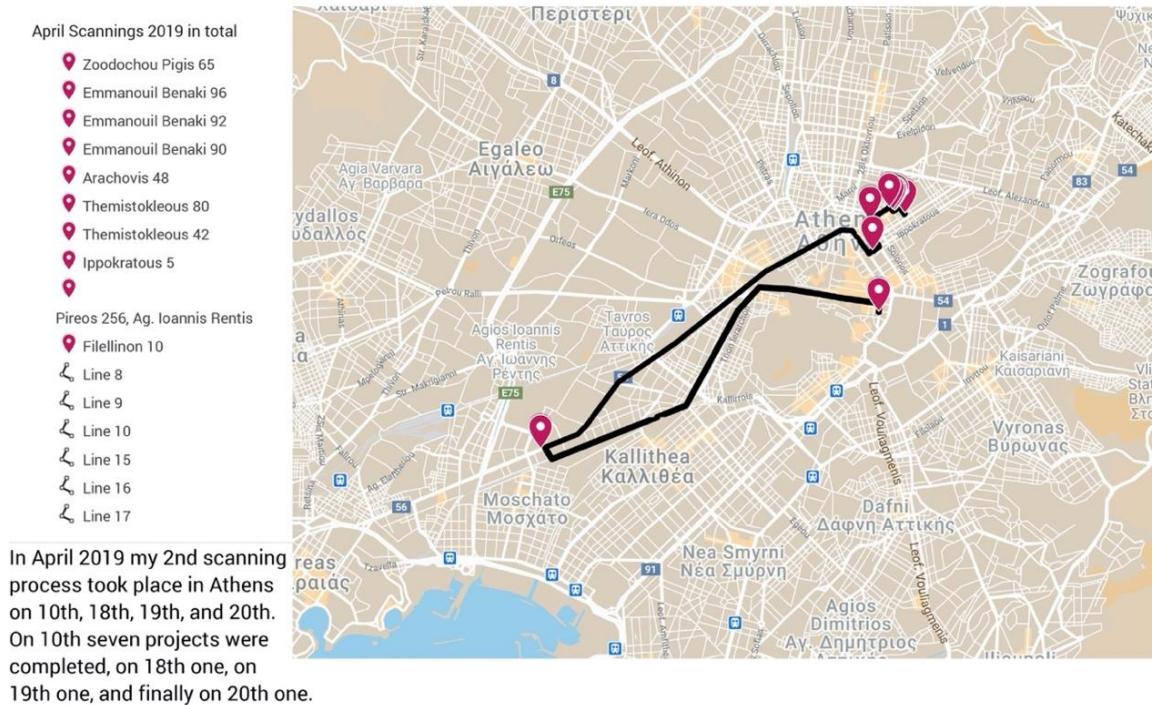


Figure 80 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 2nd periodical scanning 2019 (all the projects in total), 2019.

Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Scanning the city of Anti-spectacle: July 2019

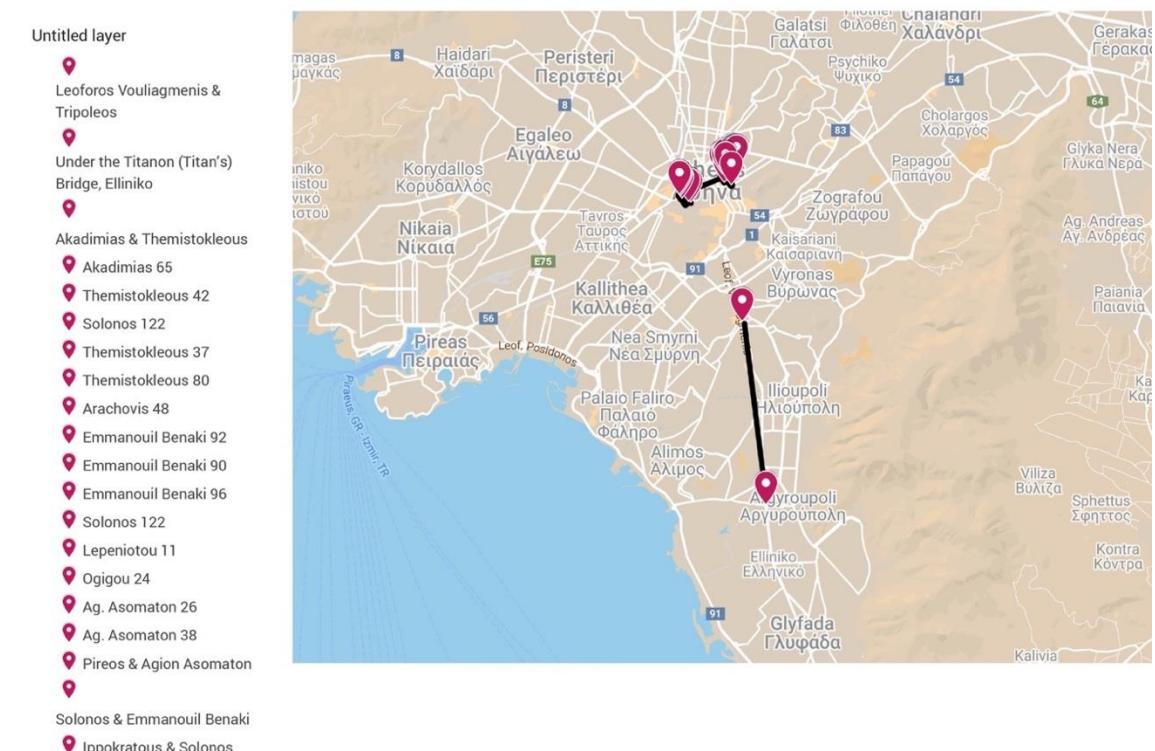


Figure 81 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 3rd periodical scanning 2019 (all the projects in total), 2019.

Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

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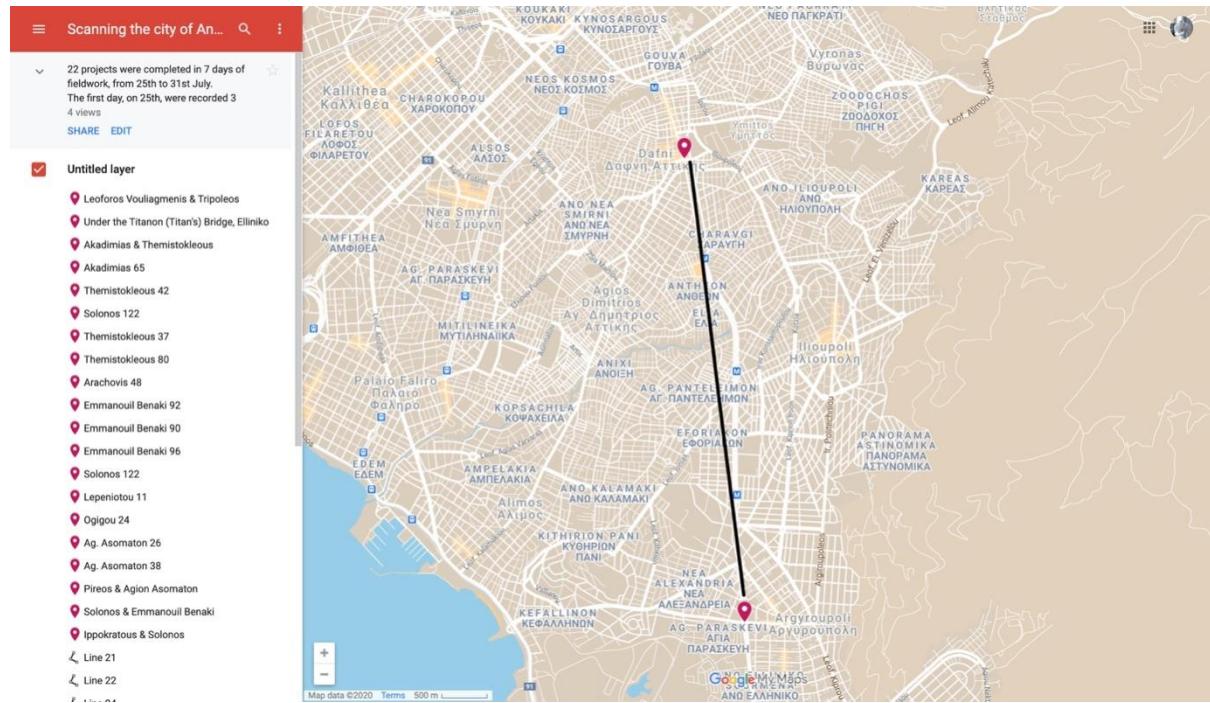


Figure 82 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 25th July (three projects), 2019. Exported Google Map.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

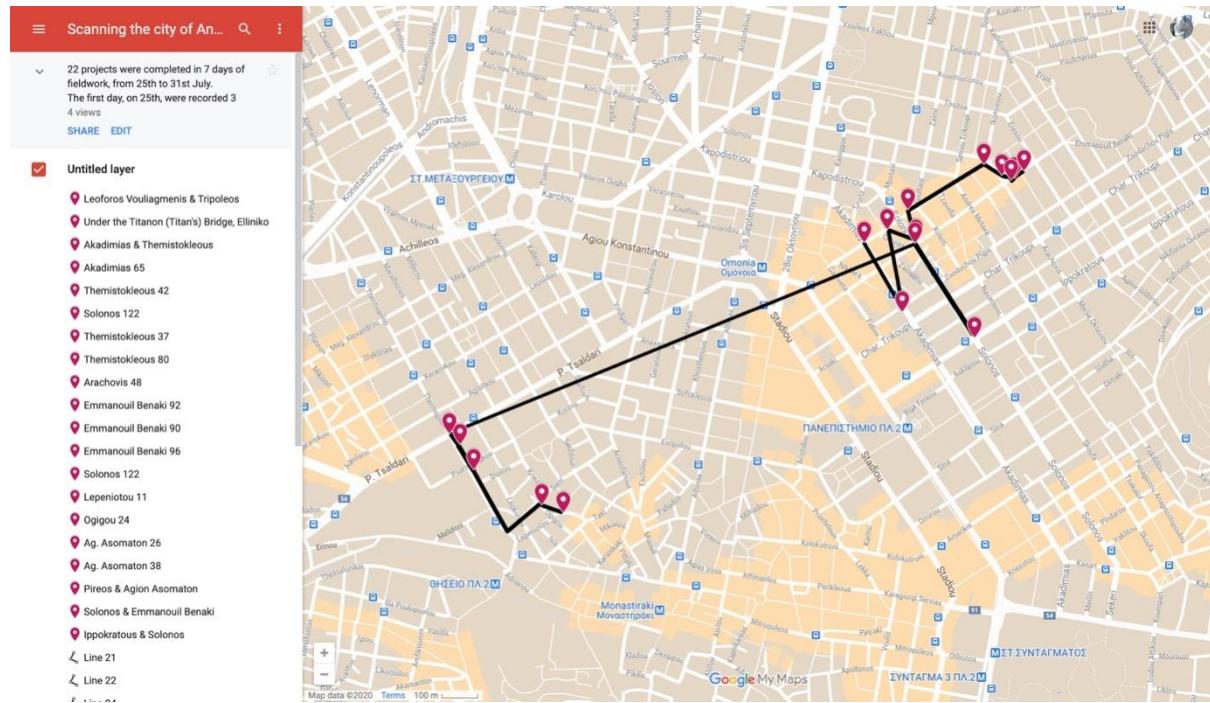


Figure 83 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 28th July (nine projects), 2019. Exported Google Maps.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

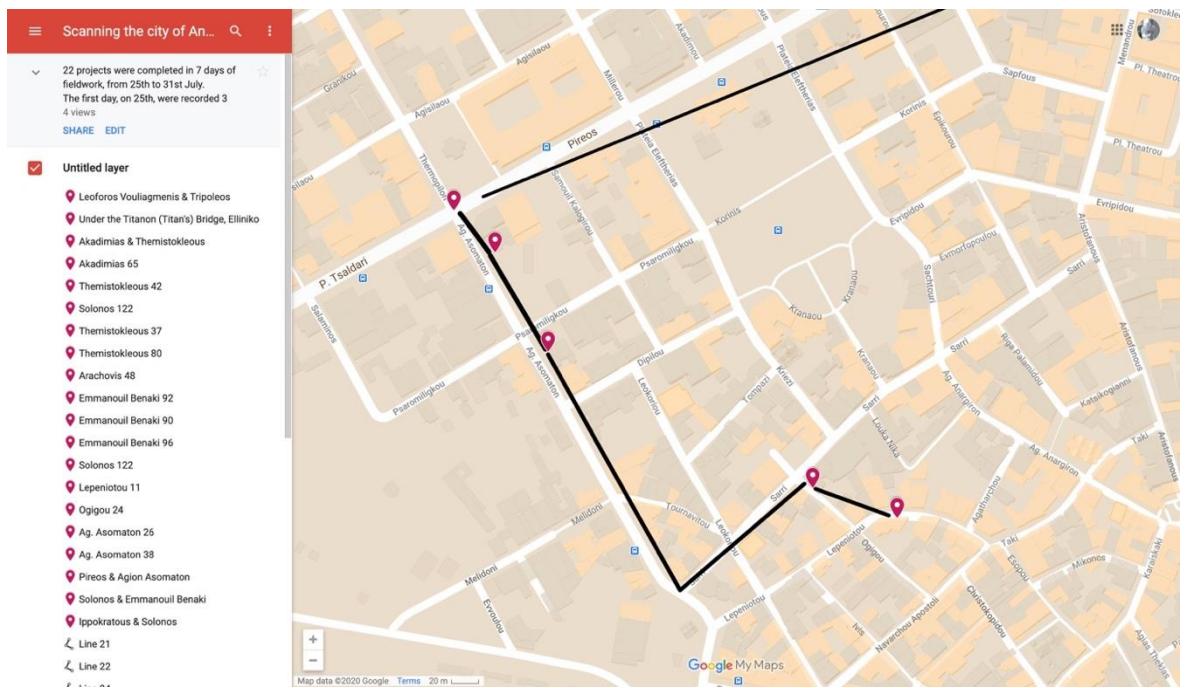


Figure 84 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 30th (two projects) and 31st July (eight projects), 2019. Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Either one clicks on an address on the list (on the left) or a pin on the map (on the right) (fig.83-84), and a label appears showing the address on top (fig. 85-88). The label has the potential for editing, so thanks to the ‘edit’ option I embedded a project title, a place (location), date of recording, exact time, minutes spent on the recording, equipment, and number of pictures taken. The option ‘add image or video’ allows me to upload pictures of the spot on that date, screenshots of the 3D scanning process that followed, etc.

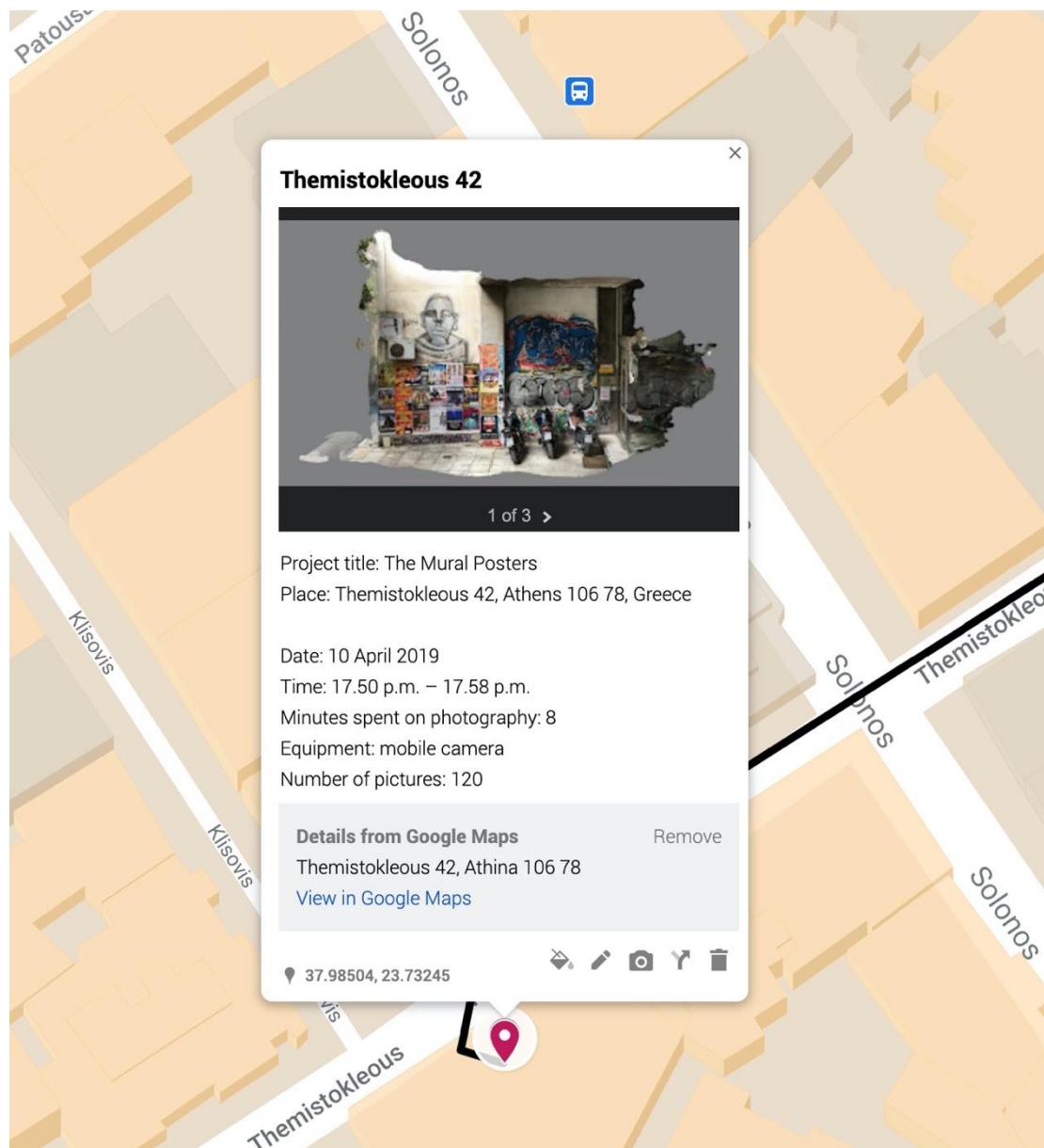


Figure 85 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Close-up of a label: the first image of the project and data, 2019.*

Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

De-Mapping the Map of Athens in Crisis

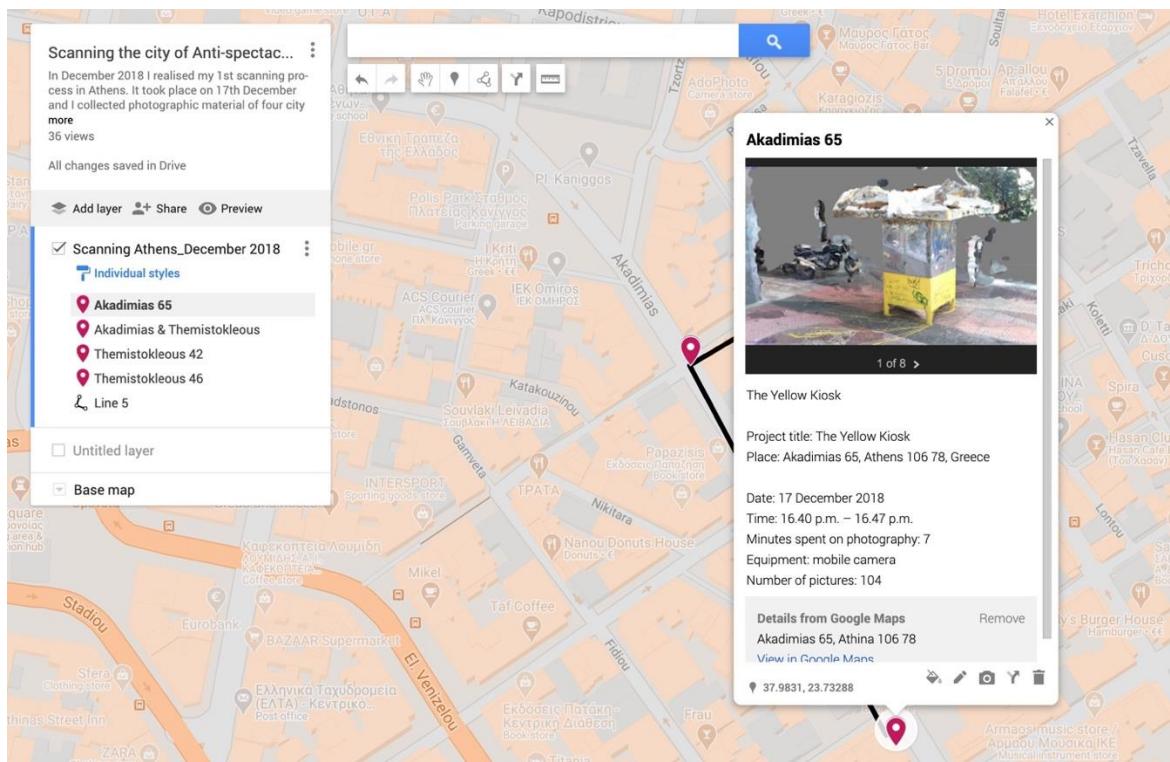


Figure 86 Panagiotis Ferentinos, the label that appears clicking on a pin or an address, 2018.
Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

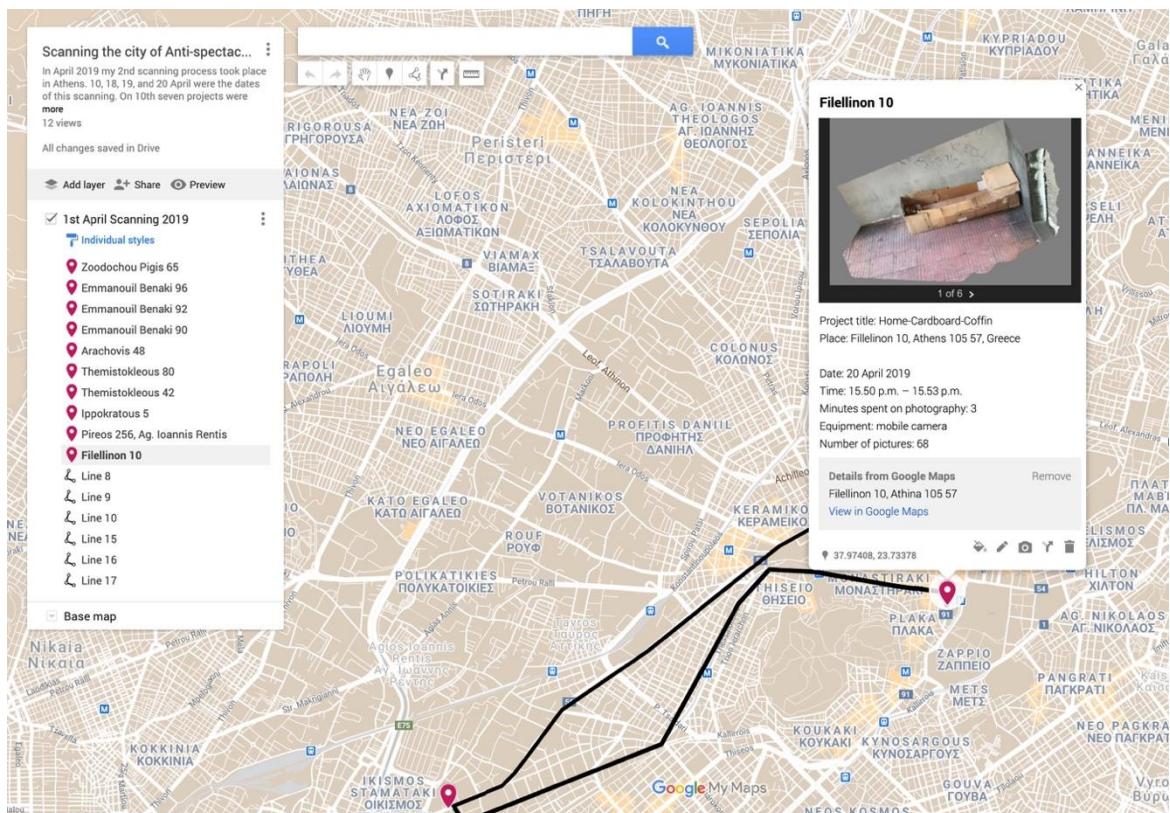


Figure 87 Panagiotis Ferentinos, the label that appears clicking on a pin or an address, 2019.
Exported Google Maps. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

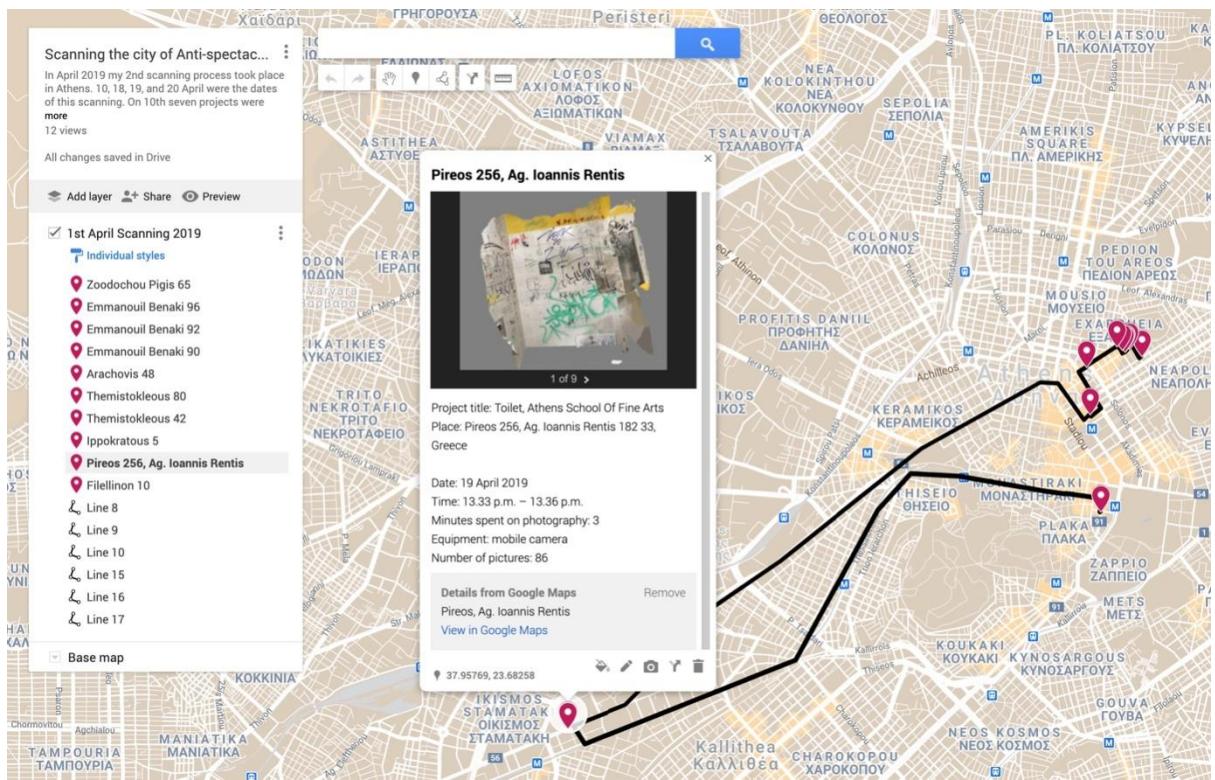


Figure 88 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The label that appears clicking on a pin or an address*, 2019.

Exported Google Map. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Looking at the maps (fig. 87-88), it is obvious that I have unified and inscribed all the spots with a black line. The contour produces a fragment that does not correspond to the real street course that someone should follow for physical wandering. It is also a way to de-map the map of reality: to virtually encounter the sights of anti-spectacle you do not need to follow an ordinary street course.

5.5 Hijacking Google Maps: potential distribution of the de-maps and the outcomes of new technologies

Concerning the practice-based nature of the research, one major concern for me is how the material of my processes can be distributed and shared with others. For this reason, it is necessary to examine how visual outcomes based on new massively used technologies—applied in fine art and practice-based research—can be hosted in virtual spaces for broader accessibility. Spreading my material can be a way to make the imagery of an economic crisis accessible (or even known) to a wider public.

For this purpose, I set out to take it a step further and interrogate Google's authority to exhaustively map out our urban realities. By taking over its Maps and putting my outcomes

in city areas (pins), I produce my own crisis' wanderings as a visual response to Google's decision to visually rule our daily lives. The act of hijacking its maps has the intention of drawing attention to the subtle and typically invisible signs of a crisis, which Google pays absolutely no conceptual attention to. That is to say, Google is unable to choose and discern such traces or provide information about their cultural significance. In an inanimate decision to record the skin of our cities, Google only seeks to visually dominate the field. Two objectives may be accomplished by appropriating its maps: first, it turns a regular GIS program into a research tool, and second, the results are directed at a larger audience. Viewers ('visitors') can access and use each map via an exported link for their virtual wandering or for suggested actual wanderings in Athens. As a result, anyone can use their own devices to become a virtual 'viewer-visitor-flaneur' without going to a gallery or museum—locations intended for art exhibitions.

By producing the virtual de-maps, a huge database of pictures and screenshots from 3D models is 'activated' and able to be shown, based on the potential of Google Maps to accommodate numerous information such as photographic images. Otherwise, all this material would remain unexploited, merely archived, and an essential part of my methodology could not be displayed. To carry my research and its outcomes forward, I decided to appropriate Google Maps. Therefore, my various digital representations can benefit from the powerful distribution of Google Maps, addressing new virtual spaces and accessibility.

According to the *Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview* reports, the use of digital, mobile, and social media has globally become an essential part of people's everyday lives. In January 2020, more than 4.5 billion people had been using the internet, and the number of active social media users had passed 3.8 billion; this number has increased by more than 9 percent (321 million new users) since April 2019 (Kemp, 2020). Social media platforms tend to be the most popular. The most broadly used online platforms are YouTube and Facebook, and users follow sites such as Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Chaffey, 2020). All the above-mentioned media invest in image culture, and people tend to get used to this as an indispensable part of their lives. Thus, I seek the potential of Google Maps to distribute the maps through social media and benefit from that. A Google Map can be shared via Facebook, Twitter, email, or embedded on a site (fig. 89), providing immediate access to someone with just a click.

The developed new material from the future collected visuals of potential fieldworks will be even more extensive. More evidence linked to the evolution of the precise city spots I have been working with (as case studies) will be exported as outcomes of this development (change, expansion, whitewashing, etc.). Thus, it is necessary to continue examining the distributive power of mass media to disseminate them. New technologies and their worldwide use seem to be fertile ground for virtual wanderings in the de-mapped city of anti-spectacle.

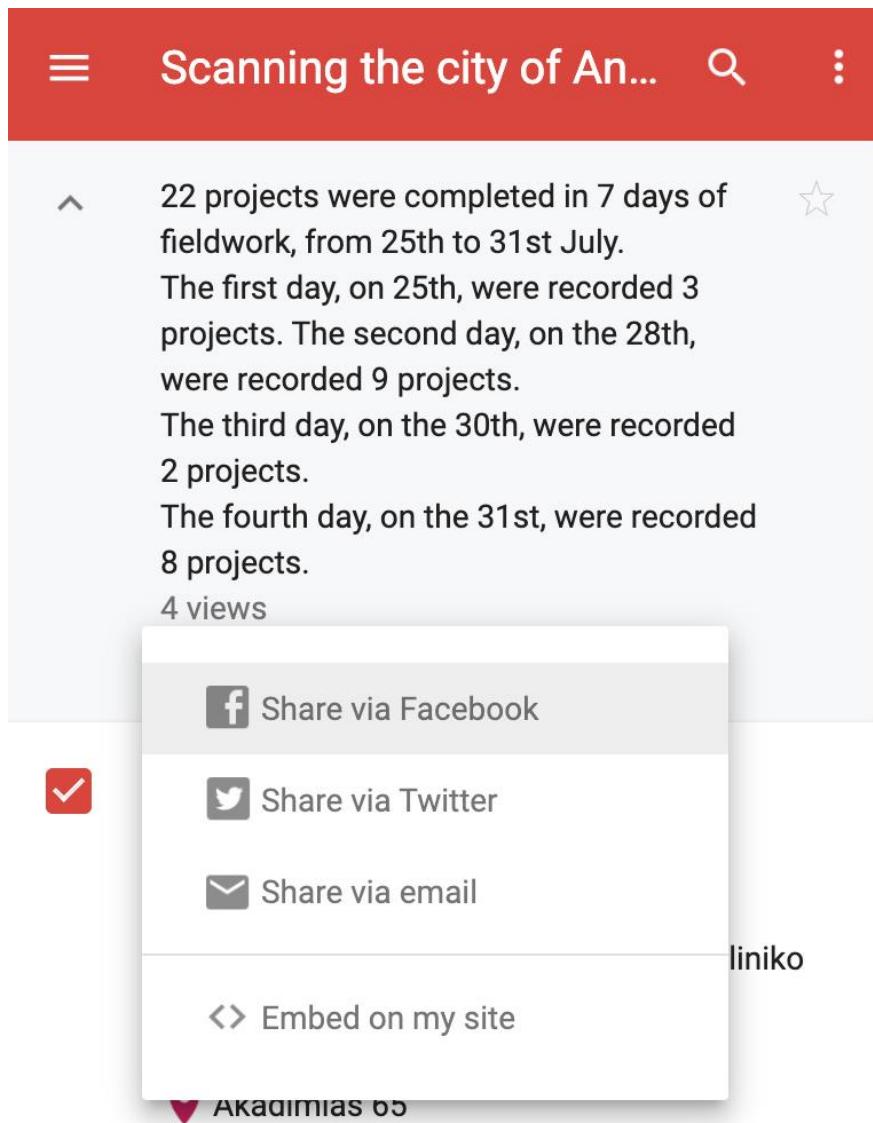


Figure 89 Panagiotis Ferentinos, sharing a map on social media, via email or embedding it on a site, 2019. Screenshot of an Exported Google Map. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

However, would a global society—that is ‘fed up’ with virtual images posted on virtual ‘walls’ and accustomed to seeking images on them—be still interested in seeing the physical walls and surfaces of a city as a medium of socio-political communication? In Strategic communications, the powerful role of images is mostly focused on the virtual space and globalised networks. But Athens still provides a distinctive spatial and material form of communication, expressed on its urban walls; a form of strategic communication in areas of socio-political crisis, a non-violent means of contested conflicts (Kim, Flores, 2018, p. 9).

5.6 How mapping differentiates the skin from conventional terminologies such as ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’

In this section, I will attempt to demonstrate how the practice and the emerging map-making helped me clarify further my positionality about how I have dealt with the Athenian imagery of the crisis. As I have discussed so far, my research moves beyond conventional terms such as ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’ for the Athenian urban tracing activity in total. Indeed, it aims for a new lexicon able to correspond to the extensive presence of the skin of the crisis. In other words, I deal with how we move from the detail to the fragment (the documented object and its pin) to the whole, the skin and the map. For this purpose, in Appendix 1, which is in accord with this chapter and the maps, I associate Borges’s story ‘On Exactitude in Science’ (1946), and especially its metaphoric notions, with the Greek economic crisis period. In Appendix 1 (1.2) I mention that:

In the new Greek reality, the skin of the crisis is actually ‘the map that coincides point for point with the city’ (Borges, 1946). In the case of Athens, the de-mapping did not include any displacement of the former map. On the contrary, it took place on top of it, through the visual appropriation of the epidermis of the city (skin).

In other words, the idea of the map and its necessity resulted from the conceptual idea of the skin; skin and map coincide and are in total accordance. The skin of the continuously and relentlessly overwritten city is more like an urban collage with all its multimodal richness (Chapter 6). It is a persistent, omnipresent, and all-embracing activity rather than ‘street art’. Kim and Flores (2018) attempt to base their approach on a broader graffiti context that includes ‘the slogans, the murals, and forms of street art’ (p. 10), namely ‘the multiple modes by which graffiti and street art have changed our way of seeing, knowing, and representing

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urban environments' (Avramidis and Tsilimpounidi, 2017, p. 1). Nonetheless, these ingredients, as evidence of urban activity, imply a study of individual pieces (a mural, graffiti, etc.) or even as a whole, namely a group of graffiti or slogans. Yet this terminology is still limited, provided that the existing bibliography has concentrated on the Athenian centre; especially on one area, Exarhia. For example, this is Spyropoulos' (2013) case, addressing recorded material in the Exarhia area during a precise period, 2009–2013 (Chapter 4: 4.7), or the emphasis is placed on 'graffiti's function as a testament of creativity and artistry... as an urban culture' (Stampoulidis, 2016, p. 10).

The concept of a de-map is how ordinary Google Maps is hijacked to attest to the skin's physical space and its unfolding. Fragments of the skin are placed as glitches on the perfect [Google] map and signal its existence. This concept is finally reflected in the 'de-maps' idea and provides the potential for further developments, namely how a de-map can continue displaying the tracing evolution in the future, generating newly developed maps.

Without a doubt, throughout the last 15 years, the focus on documenting the metamorphosis of Athens's public space has indeed included, for instance, verbal representations such as slogans, as a way to study the socio-political presence in a specific area or period. Nonetheless, referring to the concept of this research project, I have centred on the generally modified image of Athens in crisis, its visual immensity, and the relentless change. Even the deteriorated trace has its place in this enormity as an equal compositional element of the skin of the city without being characterised as 'graffiti'. If 'actively inscribing civic presence, the new imageries that transform the meaning and potential of the city [Athens]' (Kim and Flores, 2018, pp. 10-11) is used as an alternative study of communication instead of internet distribution, my digital engagement (and ways to distribute it) aims to merge the real walls with the virtual walls. Thus, isolating graffiti and slogans would only provide a partial sense of the imagery of anti-spectacle. In contrast, my distributed material through the de-maps covers the whole variety of Athens surfaces, such as closed stores (e.g., in Chapter 6: 6.3), city boxes (fig. 90), walls (fig. 91), and not only graffiti or slogans.

Looking back at my first map, December 2018 (fig. 77-78), in comparison to my second, April 2019 (fig. 79-80), and third one, July 2019 (fig. 81-84), one would realise the initial limitation in a number of projects and wandering course (short distance). Yet even at this primary stage (fig. 77-78), I differentiated myself from graffiti and slogans. Then, unconsciously, I engaged with city objects that may normally seem indifferent. Indicative examples were the two post-boxes (fig. 90) and only one wall that displayed a polyphony of

elements and their ability to co-exist on the same surface (fig. 91). Nevertheless, these urban volumes are equally dynamic at the service of the skin of the city. From the maps that came after, in April and July 2019 (fig. 104-109), it is obvious that the number of projects, the recorded areas, and wandering distances increased. In fact, through these last fieldworks, I began to examine and draw visual conclusions about the powerful proliferation of the skin. My aim for the future of this research deals with how the resulting maps will not only cover the development of the same spots but will also include others to show the variety of surfaces, objects, and areas that host this skin. The future maps—and at the end, all the maps as a whole—will accommodate these city spots and provide either their evolution through time or new virtual wanderings.



Figure 90 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Urban objects: 'The Grey Post-box' (left) and 'The Red Post-box' (right), 2018-19. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

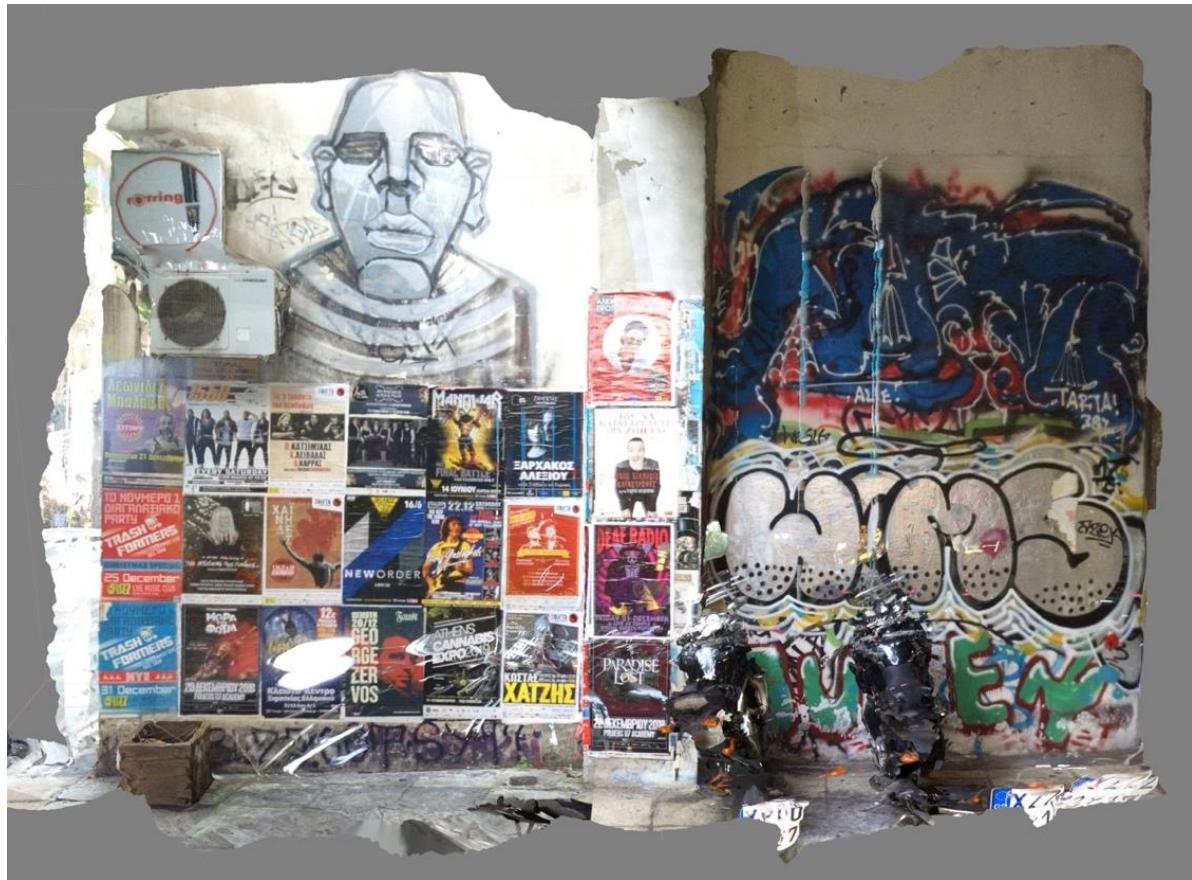


Figure 91 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Project: 'The Mural Posters', 2018. Photogrammetry.
©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

My research's engagement with new technologies and digital images aims to explore how technological advancement may offer a more direct way (or a different direction) for more people to get involved in fine art approaches. Engaging with media that thousands of people (even millions) use in their everyday lives may contribute to a new discourse between the artist and the broader public. This direction, as an apparatus of immediate communication, can be achieved both with visuals and informative data. For instance, a massively distributed link (fig. 92) that leads to a map of my fieldwork in Athens may, on the one hand, attract a new public that normally would not intend to visit a museum, a gallery space, etc. before. On the other hand, the city of anti-spectacle, Athens in crisis, may be 'accessed' by more people even in alternative navigation, that of showing the visualisation of the crisis in maps. Hence, this developing methodology could become a new approach to contemporary art, aiming to narrow the gap between art and a broader public by acting in a virtual space where both can intersect. On the next page, four links corresponding to four fieldworks provide the viewer with the potential of a virtual tour where each pin hosts a wide variety of visual information for each spot. The pin becomes the medium for the unfolding of a spot's evolution and history in front of the viewer's (visitor, virtual wanderer) eyes.

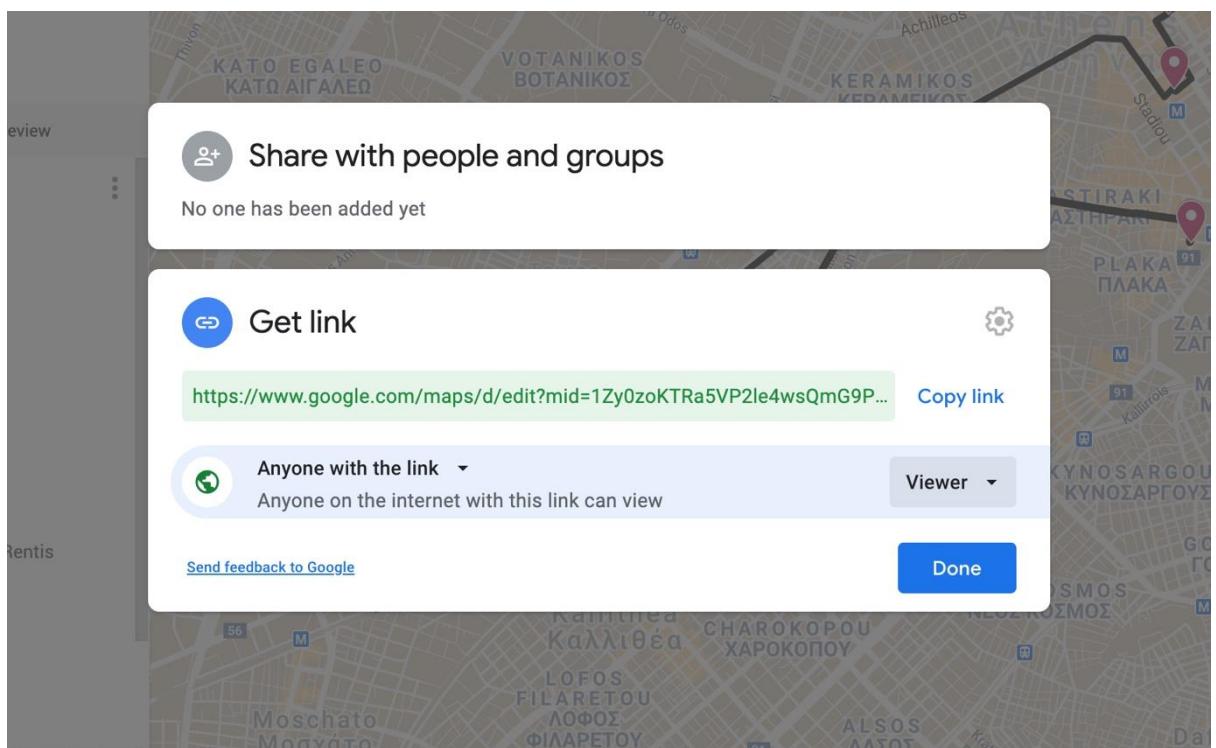


Figure 92 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Get a link: Sharing a map with other people and groups*, 2019.
Screenshot of an Exported Google Map. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

December 2018:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1UtO5cXtmWtG_fA46wDhSHAq-L1o_gWSr&usp=sharing

April 2019: The first scanning process, 10th April:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1skuOpzTPwEsJY6J5MW2nnjwufy-a9p-Q&usp=sharing>

The whole April scanning process:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1Zy0zoKTRa5VP2le4wsQmG9PmX8I03ZTe&usp=sharing>

July 2019:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1IqN8KQST2YOmO76X4XbfvuuikS1Oc1Zq&usp=sharing>

5.7 Virtually visiting and accessing the de-maps

At this stage, I display how I make use of a pin and render the maps ‘mini galleries’. By uploading visual material from my fieldwork documentation (photographs) and diverse outcomes from the 3D scanning processes (virtual objects, shapes, volumes, skins with textile and colour, etc.), these ‘mini galleries’ can be accessible to anyone via a link (fig. 92). Once we choose an address or a pin (fig. 93, 95) and opt for ‘Preview’, one can visit the

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photo gallery by clicking on the photo at the bottom, on the left: '9 photos' available in this photo gallery (fig. 92), '3 photos' available in the other (fig. 94). The photo gallery can be displayed in full screen and indeed act as a virtual 'mini gallery' (fig. 94, 96).

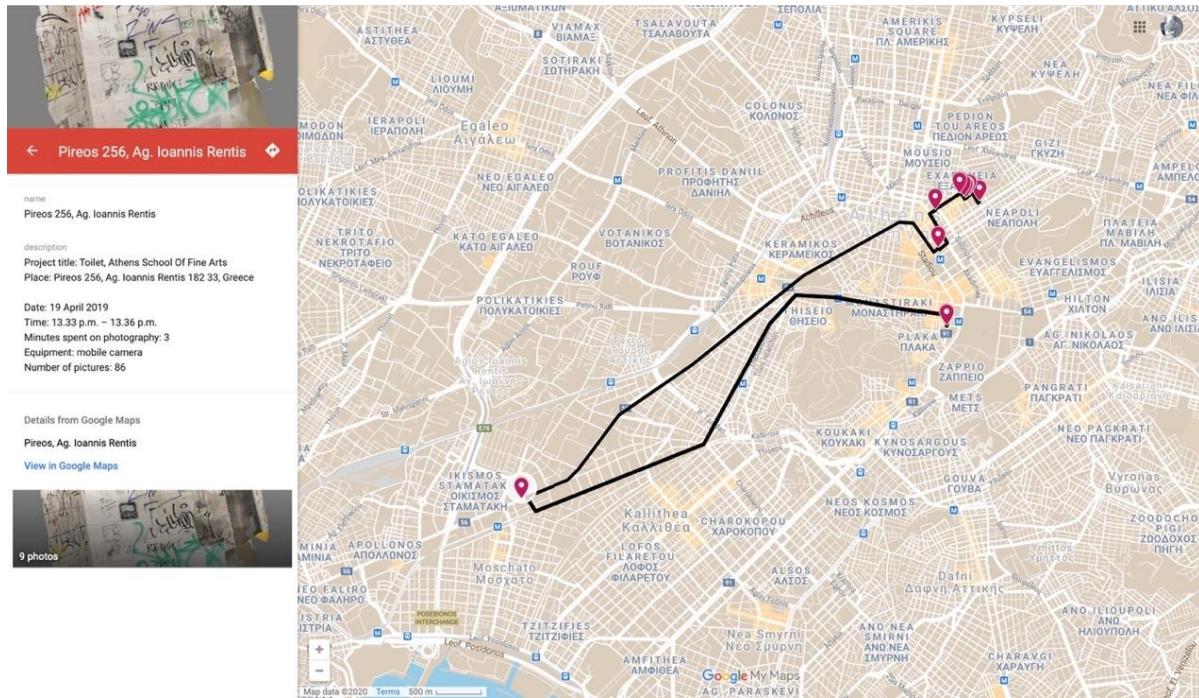


Figure 93 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Preview as a 'mini gallery', 2019. Exported Google Map.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.



Figure 94 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A virtual 'mini gallery', 2019. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

De-Mapping the Map of Athens in Crisis

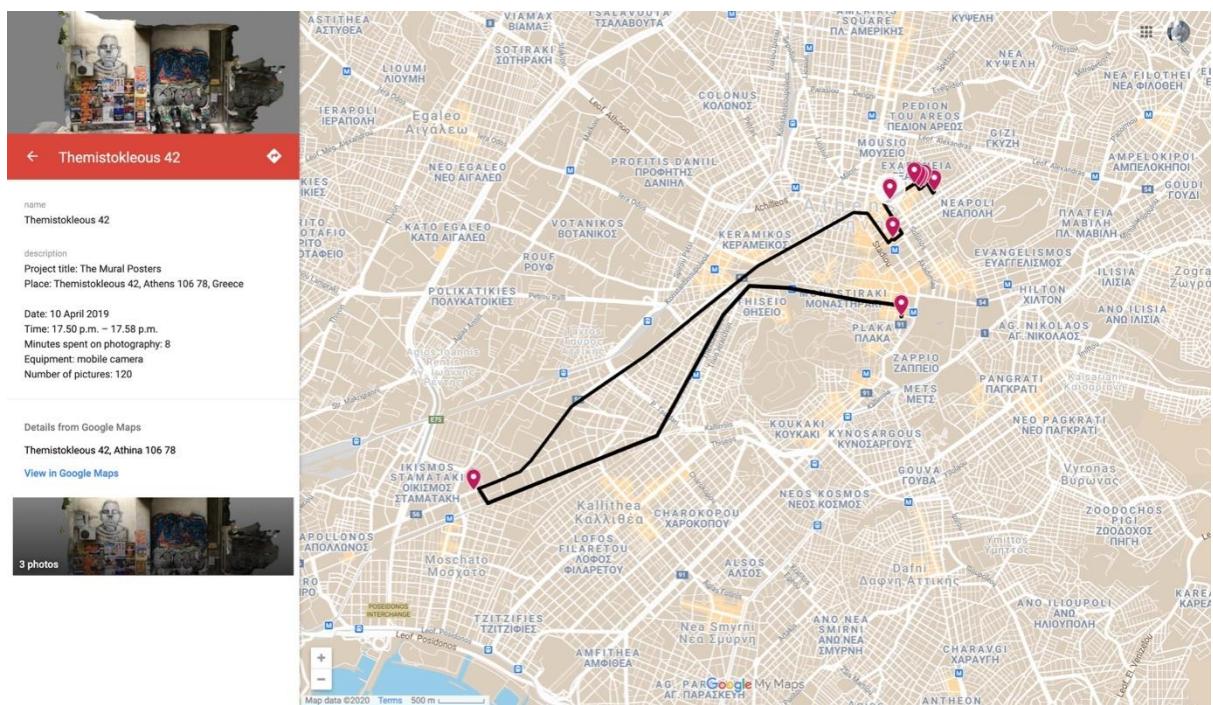


Figure 95 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Preview as a 'mini gallery', 2018. Exported Google Map.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

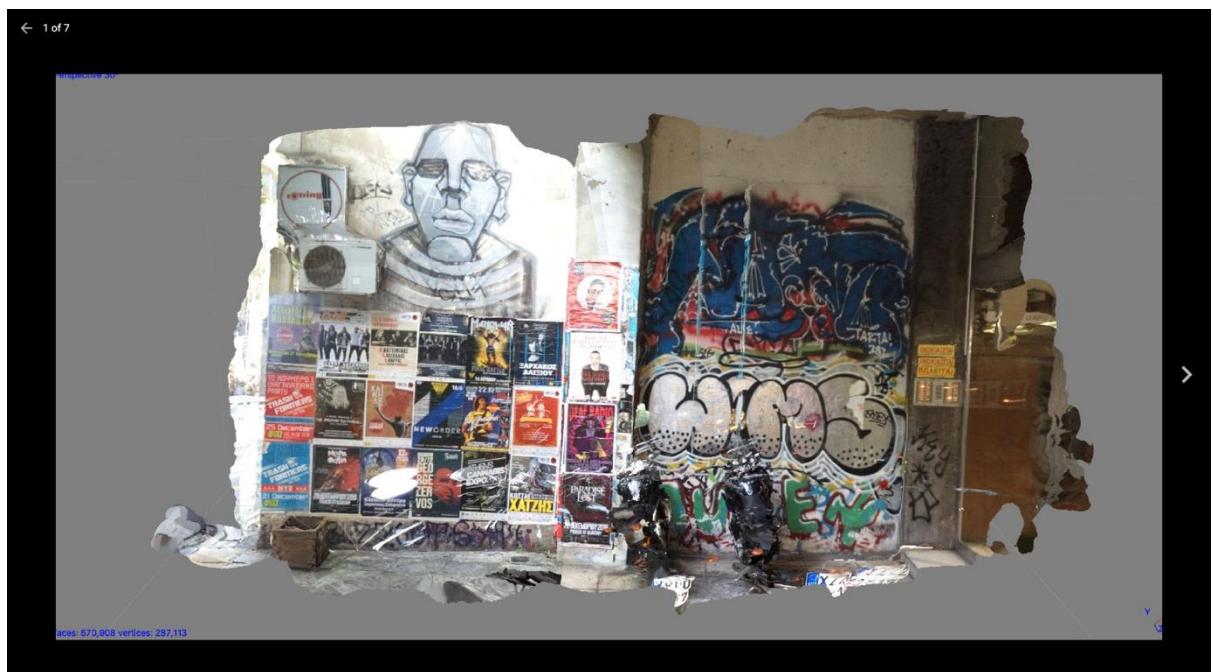


Figure 96 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A virtual 'mini gallery', 2018. Photography. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

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As I mentioned before, with a simple click on a pin, the label that appears acts as a ‘mini gallery’ and provides all the embedded information (text and visuals). The next two images (fig. 97-98) display the project ‘The Mural Posters’, realised on December 17, 2018.

The images used for the gallery show different viewpoints of the 3D-scanned wall. The potential of various options for texture adds other dimensions to the project. This is, for instance, the ‘Solid’ choice of Photoscan (3D) [Agisoft Metashape] furnishing the scanned area with a purple coherent skin with a velvet black back (fig. 98).

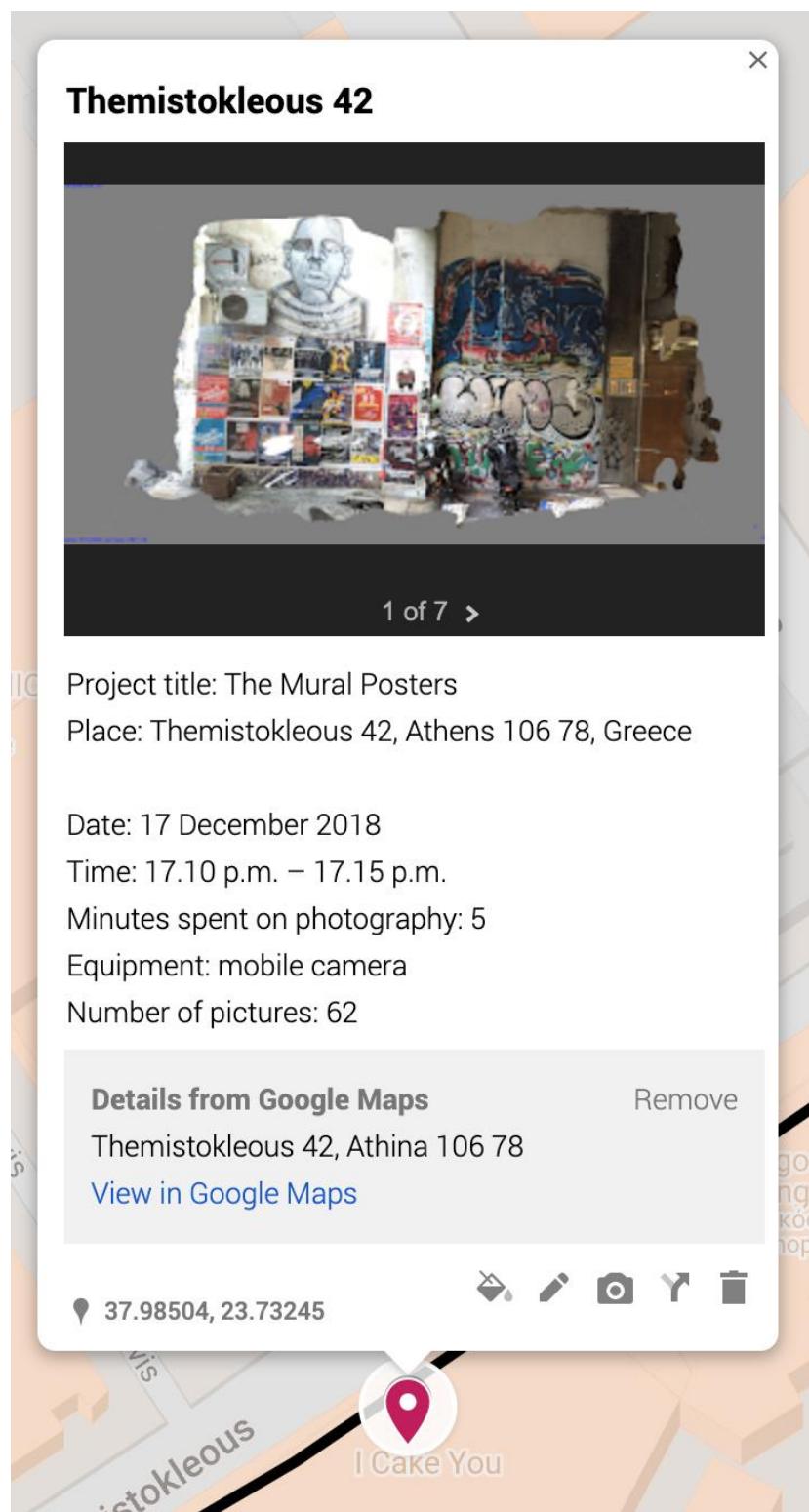
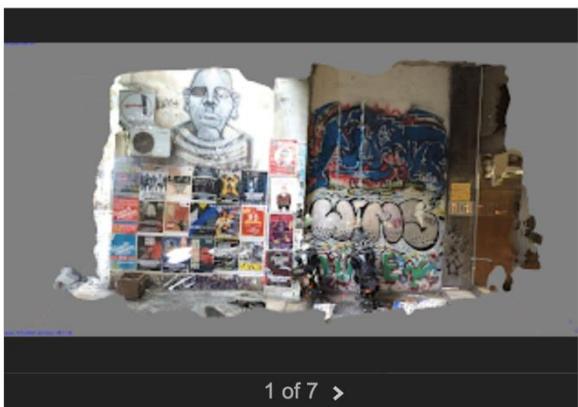
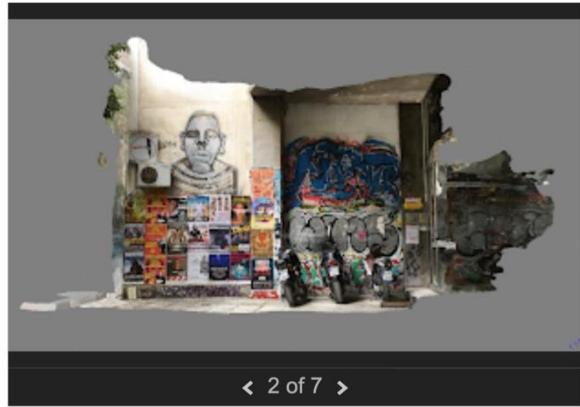


Figure 97 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Label as a 'mini gallery', 2018. Screenshot of an Exported Google Map. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

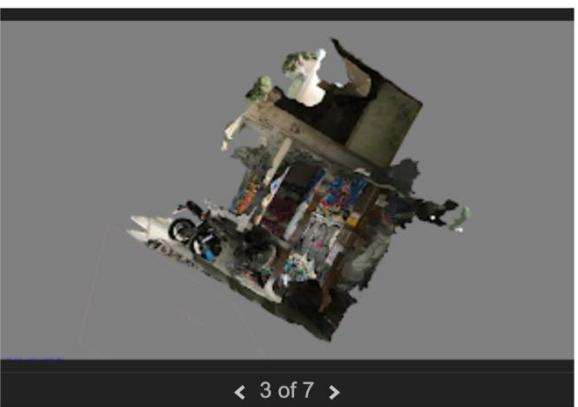
Themistokleous 42



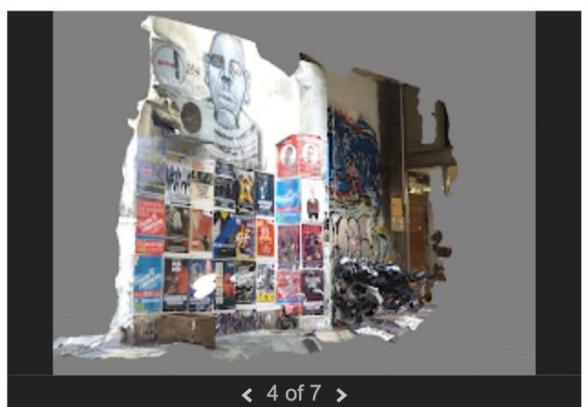
Themistokleous 42



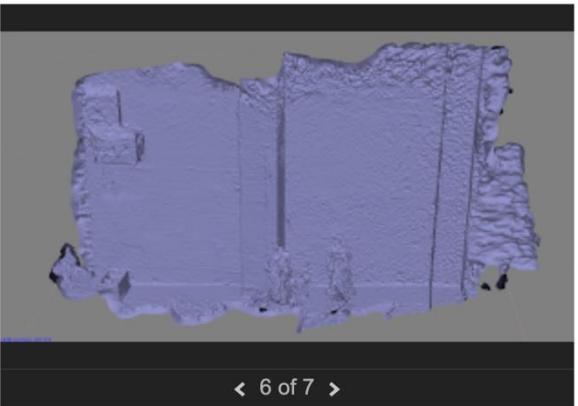
Themistokleous 42



Themistokleous 42



Themistokleous 42



Themistokleous 42

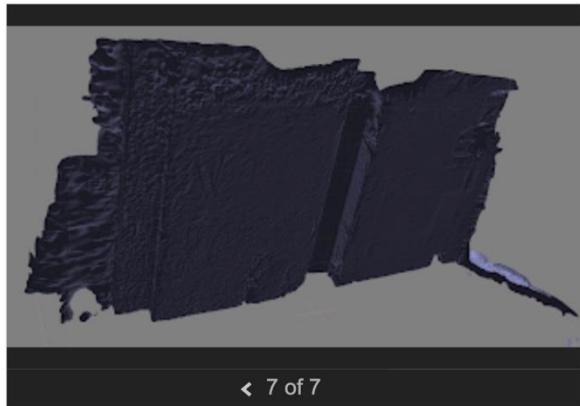


Figure 98 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A virtual 'mini gallery', 2018. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2020 Google.

Chapter 6 Décollage and Collage: the organic derma

6.1 Retrieving past city layers: a décollage approach

Since my research was initiated in 2018 and only a few documentations of the displayed spots were recorded, I relied on GIS potential and Google Maps for regaining past city layers. Certainty: This virtual exploration of the past is limited, provided that only a few fragmented time lapses were available. In the following pages, I will present the chronological ‘metamorphoses of selected projects through visuals, bearing testament to the cityscape’s ‘peeling’ organic process and its firm connection to the crisis impact. I will also show how I crossed from my own collected material to Google Maps to link the present to the past and provide evidence of a holistic evolution of the skin.

Access to prior city layers to retrieve the visually written history of the urban collaged skin would be possible through a ‘décollaging’ methodology. A décollage is ‘the opposite of collage. It means ungluing, unsticking, and taking off. It occurs naturally in cities when poster hoardings are torn and defaced, revealing several layers of imagery’ (Walker, 1977, p. 100). This definition implies a material act, a hand-based one, weathering, or a tactile defacement as an artistic act. Within the framework of materiality, in the mid-1960s Alain Jouffroy (1966) described Raymond Hains as the artist who ‘prefers ripped-down posters as he finds them, as they appear to anyone in the street, and who with something like awe discovers in them traces of *poetry composed by everyone*’ (p. 82). Hains’s décollages were the ‘poetry of the street, the archaeology of the collective unconscious’ (1966, p. 84). Yet, this aspect of décollage appears rather deconstructive. Taylor (2008) sees décollage as a more constructive process:

For if décollage, or the ungluing of paper, is the tearing of parts asunder, then collage, literally sticking, is a constructive attachment of parts to make a new or reassembled whole. But ‘destruction’ and ‘construction’ are imprecise metaphors here. For just as décollage reveals an existing surface beneath, and hence is constructive, collage deals in already detached fragments and in that sense pays witness to a previous dismantling (p. 9).

A décollage methodology, as a constructive vehicle rather than decomposing, may give a new role to a decision for a documentation strategy. We can document different stages of the derma before a new layer hides the prior one, and the forthcoming follows the same

course. Likewise, we can retrieve a prior or a following stage in terms of an image taken at a specific time. Both methods were employed in my project and will be shown below through case studies. Hence, a temporal décollaging formula was built up that digitally preserves each stage without any lack of material in terms of a physical tearing apart, namely what Raymond Hains did as I stated above. In my methodology, by utilising Google Maps, I explain and examine how a contemporary décollage shifts to a virtual space and, through technology, functions as a tool for unveiling fragments of the past.

6.2 Defining the framework of a current décollage

A juxtaposition of the conditions within which the post-war décollage emerged and those of Greece's economic crisis may further clarify what kind of décollage is necessary for my present investigation. The décollage activity began to occur when, in early the 1950s, the billboards and the technology for printing large-scale posters (visual and text) started to fade away. The decline of both spaces and technology gradually attracted artistic interest. The abandoned sites of advertisement (ruins) and the outmoded technology both became useless for the promotion of commodities with the advancement of the knowledge of engineers (Buchloh, 1991, pp. 98-100). In Athens's case, it was the crisis that inactivated the former dynamic of spaces and means of advertisement: the ruins are the closed stores; the hoardings were useless and were gradually abandoned. If commodities could not find a place to be displayed, they would not be sold. Hence, we do not notice a shift towards another public space or means.

In post-war France, the *décollagistes*, the anonymous lacerators of the billboards, would realise an artistic rebellion, including anonymous gestures of defacement, in an indifferent urban space with an outmoded medium (Buchloh, 1991, pp. 100-101). Anonymity is also a characteristic of the Athenian lacerators, but they do not intend to attack the spectacle of advertisement; the posters of the crisis mostly communicate socio-political calls for protests and strikes. Even the advertisement of cultural events that took place in the city could be seen as a form of protest: although the crisis is devastating, we still invest in culture. As I stated before, in Athens, the anonymous lacerators (urban décollage) seek a way to gain 'fresh' space to disseminate new information, it is not an act of artists. Besides, another kind of décollage could be considered in how the current mayor of Athens and other private businesses vanish this skin and whitewash the city, so we miss the potential of a physical regaining of the past. Only a virtual one would achieve it. Yet, I will refer to this case at

length in the next chapter, relevant to the ‘clean city’. For now, I rely on several case studies to illustrate my attempt to peel the ‘sedimentary’ skin away.

6.3 Case Study: ‘B & K’ Closed Store

Place: Themistokleous 37, Athens 106 83, Greece

When I first photographed ‘B & K’ closed store in January 2012 (fig. 99), I was not able to understand what kind of store it had been in the past. Both its door and showcase were extremely covered with multiple layers of posters. At first, the slogan below the covered showcase drew my attention: ‘LAMPROS LIVES’. Lámpros is a Greek male name and means ‘one who brightens’. But written in capital Greek (so the accent is not obvious), it could be the adjective ‘lamprós’, which means ‘bright’. This double potential meaning [‘light lives’] made me record the whole store. The thick skin of the posters’ layering is indicative of the transformation of the closed stores during the years of the crisis.



Figure 99 Panagiotis Ferentinos, ‘B & K’, 2012. Photography. Themistokleous 37, 10677, Athens.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Let us consider how this image (fig. 99) may function as a ‘map’ of the specific moment of this capture (January 17, 2012). If a map is ‘a symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place, usually drawn on a flat surface’ (‘Map’, 2011), could this image—as a fragmented symbolic visual representation that portrays the last added layer (the surface)—be torn away and view what lies under the surface? Is there a way to reclaim previous layers and see when this store was still open and what kind of store it was when the layers of the crisis’ skin started to take its place? Can this de-mapping be décollaging, like the ungluing of paper, the process of taking apart? My former reference to Brandon Taylor (2008) explains the reason: décollage unmasks the existing matter underneath and is a constructive process (p. 9). Since December 2018, when I decisively began a periodical recording of city locations, I have only been able to preserve fragmentary layers of this reality. One of my projects was the ‘B & K’ closed store, initially photographed in 2012. Nonetheless, what about the layers before the image of January 2012 (fig. 99) and all those after, from 2012 to 2018? For this purpose, I adopted Google Maps’ potential to retrieve past layers. But this peeling away process, ‘de-mapping’ or ‘décollaging’, is also fragmentary. As I stated before, only a few layers of the past can be provided via Google Maps. The skin of the city in crisis has so rapidly and dynamically evolved that Google Maps (as a tool), dealing with only temporal fragments, is also fragmentary on its own. A problem arises: the skin cannot be scanned or documented in total, only mere representations of it may be achieved.

Below (fig. 100-105), I show past stages of the ‘B & K’ store’s metamorphosis and how they can function as layers of reading [through them] the development of the crisis throughout the years.

According to the first images (fig. 100-101), referring to June 2009, at the beginning of the economic crisis, ‘B & K’ was open. Relying on them (panoramic and zoomed-in), it was selling women’s clothes. At this stage, the only discernible trace of writing activity lies on the left side of the letter ‘B’ of the sign. It is a tag with a black marker. A woman was looking at its showcase, and another was doing the same at the shop on the left. Both stores were then open.



Figure 100 Google Maps, Panoramic view of 'B & K' and those nearby, June 2009. Photography. Themistokleous 37, 10677, Athens. ©2019 Google.

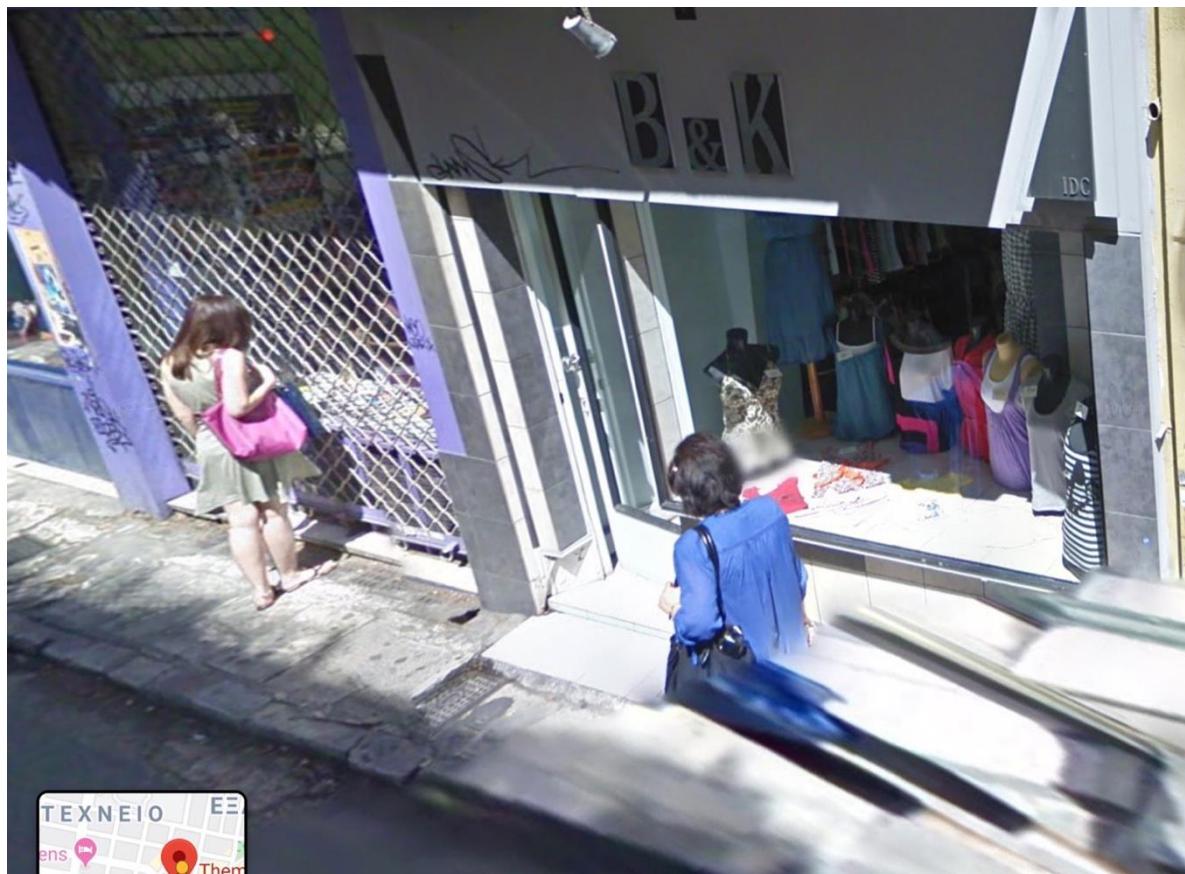


Figure 101 Google Maps, Further zooming in, June 2009. ©2019 Google.

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Figure 102 Google Maps, Panoramic view of 'B & K' and those nearby, August 2011. Photography. Themistokleous 37, 10677, Athens. ©2019 Google.

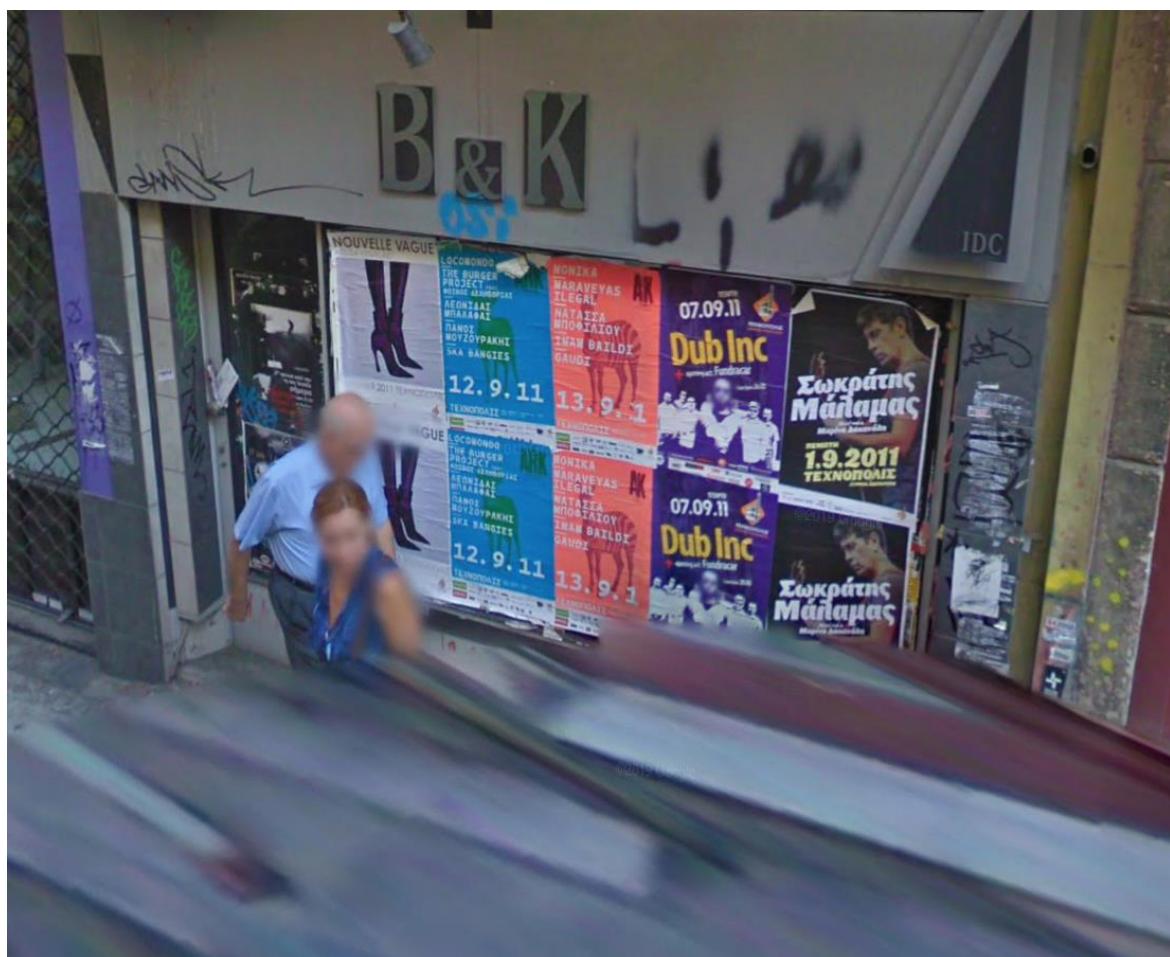


Figure 103 Google Maps, Further zooming in, August 2011. ©2019 Google.

In August 2011 (fig. 102-103), almost two years after the previous stage, 'B & K' was closed. Based upon these two past stages, it is unknown when exactly that happened. However, its showcase was full of posters at the time, and two of them are stuck on its door. Compared with the image of January 2012 (fig. 99) there is nearly the same activity. Within those four-five months, the posters' layers became thicker (fig. 99). Thereby, no one tore (or removed) the prior layers apart. In both cases (fig. 99; fig. 102-103) the writings around the sign are the same. The purple store on the left was still open.



Figure 104 Google Maps, Panoramic view of 'B & K' and those nearby, August 2014. Photography. Themistokleous 37, 10677, Athens. ©2019 Google.

In August 2014 (fig. 104-105), the posters proliferated and expanded on the column on the left. Any last-added poster is placed on top of torn past posters. The writing and spray-painting activity had increased. At this stage, the spot was so covered that one could not believe there was once a store at this place. In 2014, the purple store on the left was closed too.



Figure 105 Google Maps, further zooming in, August 2014. ©2019 Google.

This points out an evidential connection between the crisis and the cityscape, as ‘since its inception, the city has been a place of fluid normativity, political conflict, and sociocultural vibrancy’ (Campos, Zaimakis, and Pavoni, 2021, p. 5). One could thus have their first visual encounter with the crisis through the gradually appearing ruins of consumerism. Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle* ([1967] 2014) pointed out that in modern societies, where production is predominant, life is incarnated through a vast ‘accumulation of spectacles’, and the worldview has been materialistic to the extent that it becomes the objective reality (p. 2). In the case of Athens in crisis, what happens when materialism is inactive and the way of living through the ‘fetishism of the commodity’—the domination of the world by

‘imperceptible as well as perceptible things’ (Debord, [1967] 2014, p. 14), namely the fulfilment of the spectacle—cannot be reached? Indeed, during the years of the crisis, the fields of the spectacle, the marketplaces that provided commodities, were about to become ruins. Based on fieldwork, periodical recordings in Athens since 2018, and past visual documentation (and their readings), I examined how this ‘inactive spectacle’ is reflected and read on the proliferated skin that has covered Athens.

If we look at the above images (figures) anew, we can particularly perceive how the poster, due to its material nature (more than the spray-painted writings), started playing a constructive role in this Athenian skin. A poster’s role is to serve the promotional material and persuade someone of its context (Tripney, 2007); it is a stimulus to communicate a message to the general public (Adom, 2016). During the crisis, however, its role in promoting products, commodities in general, or even an artistic spectacle or a concert was rather useless. It would be even more provocative in its glamorous colours and capital captions. As mentioned above, people were not able to consume, had to pay debts with minor salaries or while being unemployed. How would they be interested in purchasing or even encountering the ‘spectacle’ they cannot afford? This may introduce a new twofold dimension to the urban torn poster (décollage) in Athens: the poster that promotes commodities has no reason to reside in the city in crisis; it has to come down. Nonetheless, the political poster becomes dominant both in context and presence. This is, in the end, the major component of the collaged skin of Athens in crisis.

6.4 The layers from pre-crisis to crisis: the constructive quality of décollage

Through a peeling away process in Athens cityscape’s surface, we would be able to recognise the steps towards the visual ruins of the crisis, or even earlier, those of the pre- and early-crisis periods that gradually led to a devastating recession. A décollage approach would therefore be a compositional process, a synthesis of history, and not further destruction in favour of the crisis. As I mentioned before, collage and décollage can only be metaphorically connected to ‘construction’ and ‘destruction’, considering that at the time that décollage flourished, the European city arose from the rubbles of a past war (Taylor, 2008, p. 9). Hence, décollage is the tool for restoring what is hidden and has not been forgotten.

By décollaging the visual coats of Athens' development, incarnated in the thick layers of posters, we would see an echo of prior forms of consumerism before and at the beginning of the crisis. Yet, while moving deeper into the crisis, could any spectacle succeed in advertising massive consumerism? This advertising has no depth and absorbs all original cultural forms, giving prominence to a superficial form (Baudrillard, [1981] 1994, p. 87). Instead, the coats of posters that belonged to the crisis would mostly witness—in particular those of the city centre—struggling, demonstrations, and several cultural events that resisted the difficult financial conditions. Advertising resistance instead of commodities has become the new reality.

According to Baudrillard ([1981] 1994), advertising is an ‘instantaneous form, [it] is a form without a past, without a future, without the possibility of metamorphosis’ (p. 87). Nonetheless, in the case of Athens surfaces, this prior advertising had indeed the potential to metamorphose. It was the very initial layer that gradually led to the skin that covered the city. Its depth would reflect a struggle against the spectacle, either referring to the political spread of information or the immense coverage of it.

6.5 Décollage: restoring the ‘derma’ of anti-spectacle

The earlier reference to décollage as a potential means to unveil coats of the early-crisis period, when the spectacle was still active in Greece, could offer visual layers of the city’s previous capitalistic forms. The posters and advertisements are there to promote consumerism by promising the idea of a ‘better life’. A number of these forms were still active over the first years of the crisis, yet subsequently they little by little declined. They normally promoted expensive brands of clothes, seductive images of Greece’s seascapes for attracting tourism (or stimulating the public opinion that the country is a paradise on earth even in crisis), glamorous nightlife in luxurious clubs, household commodities, casinos, cigarettes, etc. (fig. 108-126).

An indicative example was the corner of Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. and Tripoleos Str., in Dafni, 17237, Athens, as the walls and hoardings clearly illustrate below (fig. 106-126). In the following pages, I show how the location gradually moved towards decline and the dereliction of the previously located billboards. In the end, the whitewashing that took place on the corner led to the replacement of the former colourful and promisingly advertised reality with new urban writings. I will begin with the most recently captured condition of the

place, in 2019 (fig. 106-107), and then move progressively into the past, in 2009 (fig. 108-114), in 2011 (fig. 115-118), and in 2014 (fig. 119-126) when the illustrations on the walls had already faded way, and their fragmented realities were disappearing.

The first time I recorded the spot (photography, photogrammetry) was in December 2019 (fig. 106-107), but I remembered its steps from a phantasmagoric location, full of glossy colours and luxury, to decline. In its recent whitewashed condition, nothing could witness its prior layers (fig. 108-126). Yet, thanks to the utilisation of Google Maps as a research tool, I retrieved past captures of space from 2009 to 2014. I further explain this metamorphosis below through visuals.

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6.5.1 December 2019

This is the image of the corner in December 2019. The lower parts are used for spray-painted writing and graffiti. The upper part of the walls looks untouched, with no traces of any intervention (fig. 106-107).



Figure 106 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The spectacle's disappearance*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. & Tripoleos str., Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 107 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Close-up*, 2019. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

6.5.2 April 2009

That was the image of the same corner in April 2009, depicting the spectacle of the colourful billboards. Expensive brands of clothes and expensive nightlife were advertised (fig. 108-114).



Figure 108 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. & Tripoleos str., Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

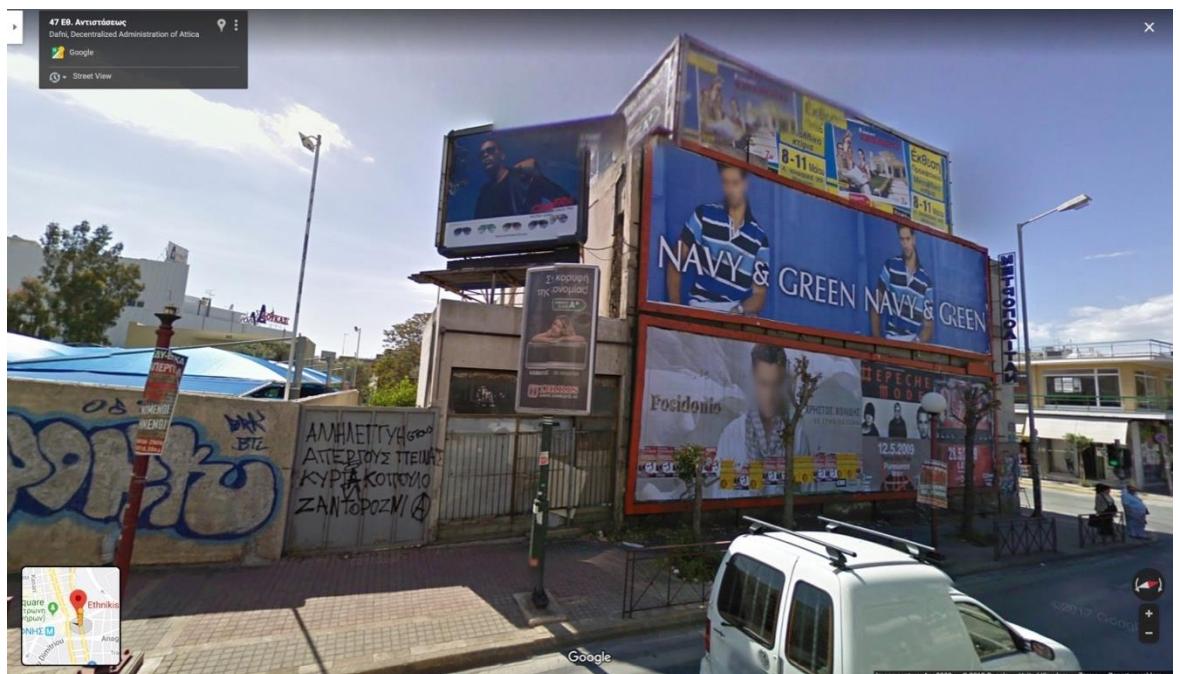


Figure 109 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. The Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

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Figure 110 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. The Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

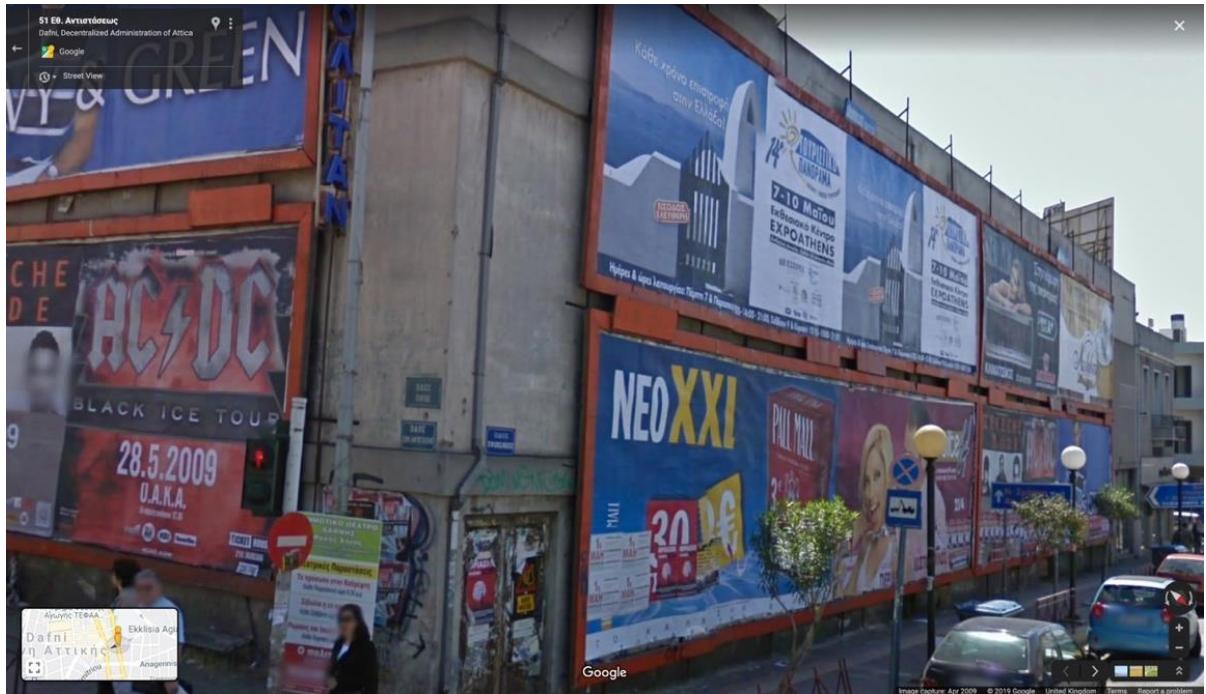


Figure 111 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. The corner of Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. & Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

The upper poster, on the left, advertises the 14th Touristic Panorama under the slogan ‘Every year return to Greece’. On its right, the poster promotes electronic household equipment. On the bottom side on the left, a huge pack of cigarettes advertises smoke, whereas on the right side, a smiling blond lady singer promotes expensive nightlife (fig. 112).



Figure 112 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

6.5.3 May 2009: Some months before the Greek elections, on October 5th, 2009

In May 2009, on the right bottom and left upper sides, there were posters of the political leftish party ‘SYRIZA’. The slogans display ‘Populism (written on the left top corner with small and lowercase letters) or Responsibility (with an immense font, covering the whole panel)?’. On the right upper side, the same party’s slogan appears: ‘FOR THE NEEDS OF ALL PEOPLE’ (fig. 113). The face of the politician George Papandreou (fig. 114) is on the

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left. He became Greece's Prime Minister in October 2009 with the Panhellenic Socialist Movement Party (PASOK). The slogan on the right side states: 'We vote for Europe; we decide for Greece'.

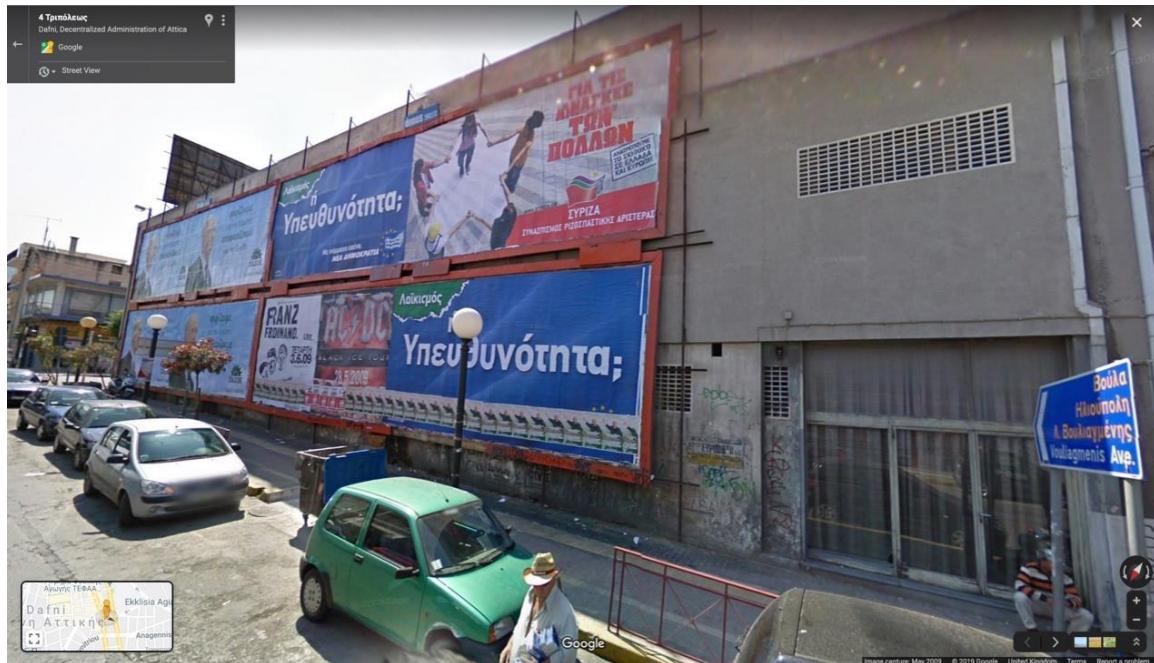


Figure 113 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

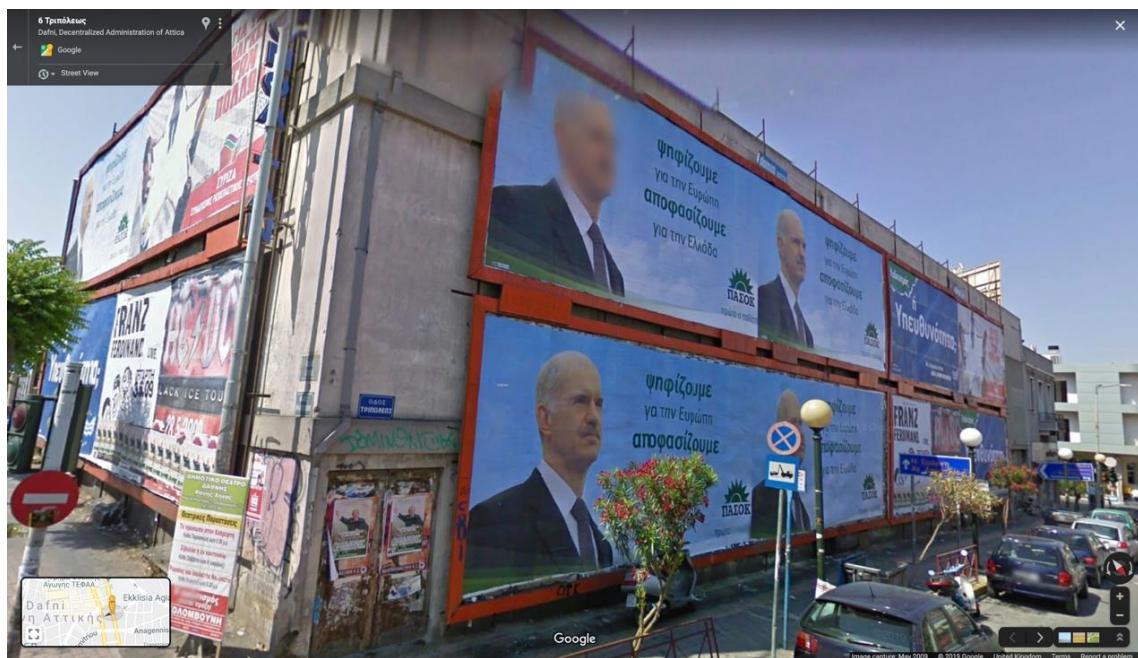


Figure 114 Google Maps, Untitled, 2009. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

6.5.4 April, May 2011: The Spectacle is the Casino

In April 2011, both sides of the corner were fully covered with an advertisement for a casino (fig. 115). In May 2011 (fig. 116), the upper level of the billboard still advertised the casino, while the lower part displayed expensive nightlife.



Figure 115 Google Maps, Untitled, April 2011. Photography. Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. & Tripoleos str., Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.



Figure 116 Google Maps, Untitled, May 2011. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

6.5.5 August 2011: The Spectacle is the Casino

In August 2011, we notice the persistence of the advertisement for the casino, in different colours at that time (fig. 117-118).

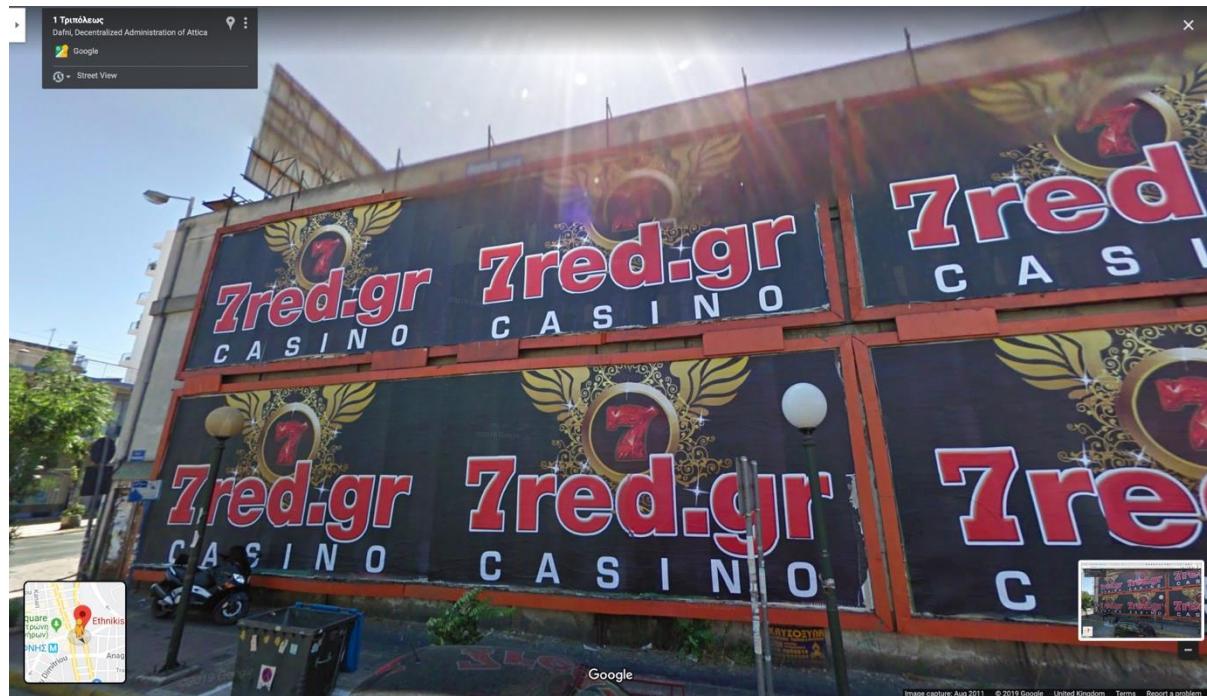


Figure 117 Google Maps, Untitled, 2011. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

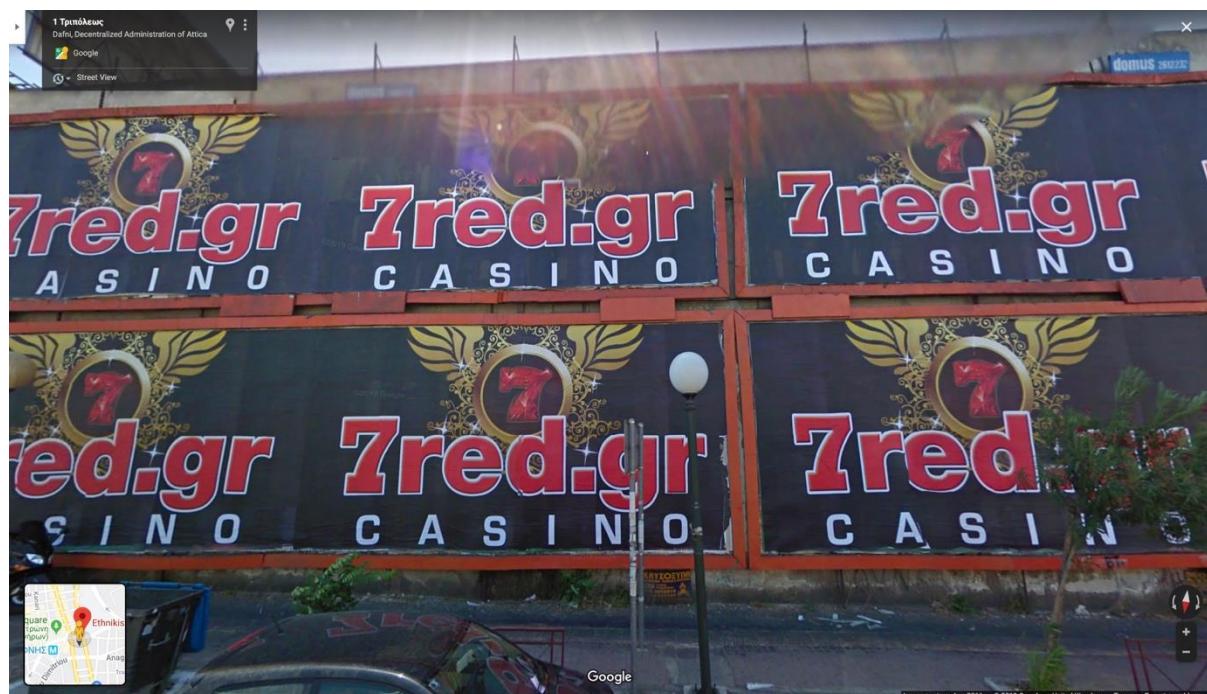


Figure 118 Google Maps, Untitled, 2011. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

6.5.6 August 2014

The upper part of the billboard was abandoned and worn away. A natural décollage took place. The lower part was still representative, but its colours had faded away. The lower part advertised a glamorous club and displayed a celebrity male singer (fig. 119-120). Both upper sides were in shreds (fig. 120). On the left side, we notice the ruins of the earlier casino advertisement.



Figure 119 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.



Figure 120 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

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Only fragmented rubble from the previously advertised spectacle has remained. The lower part (fig. 121) was partially shredded, probably by passers-by, unveiling numerous stratifications of prior realities. It reminds us of Taylor's (2008) argument on décollage as a constructive process, bringing to light the existing realities lying underneath (p. 9).



Figure 121 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.



Figure 122 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

6.5.7 November 2014

Below, we notice a panoramic view of both streets (fig. 123). A juxtaposition of the upper and lower billboards is also provided (fig. 124-125).



Figure 123 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. Ethnikis Antistaseos Ave. & Tripoleos str., Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.



Figure 124 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

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Although the lower part was still active, advertising a nightclub, the upper part is in shreds (fig. 126).

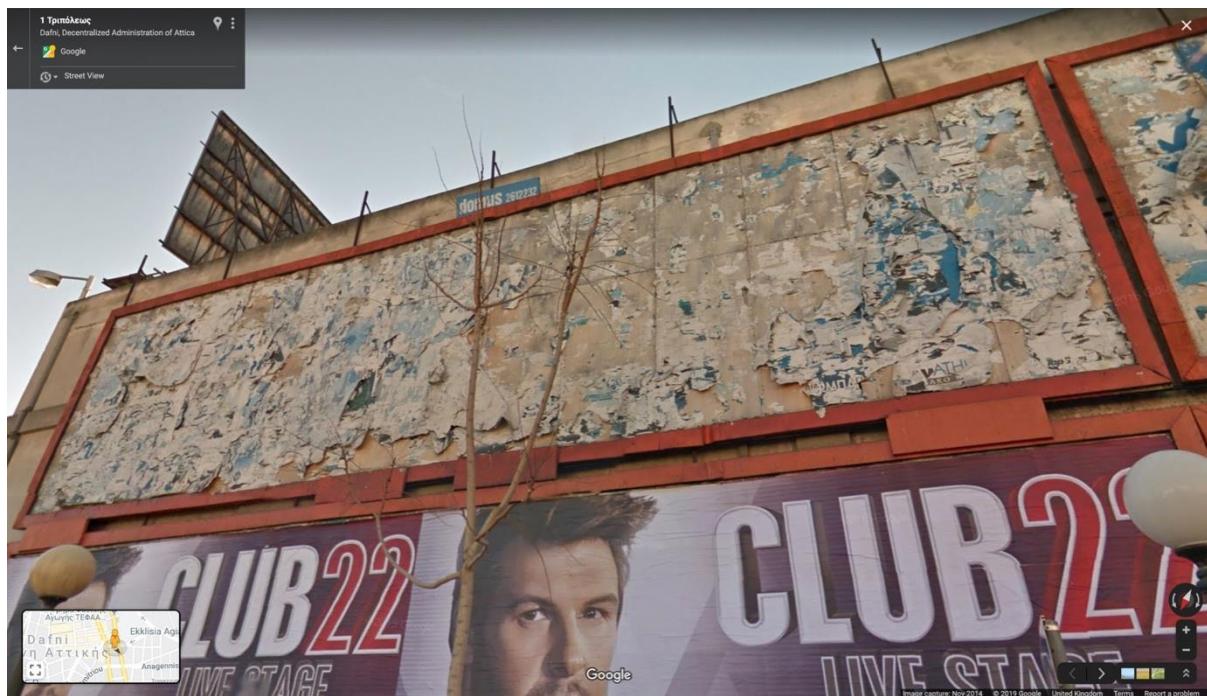


Figure 125 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side, Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.



Figure 126 Google Maps, Untitled, 2014. Photography. The Tripoleos str. side (close-up), Dafni, 17237, Athens. ©2019 Google.

6.6 Crisis: a new reality. Ruins of ‘spectacle’ build the anti-spectacle

The Greek crisis, as the new omnipresent condition, arrived not to pretend or usurp the place of the prior reality but to establish a new one without products and commodities. Could this simulation of reality, the crisis, be the new reality that, in the long term, came to ostracise the society of the spectacle and outplace it?

As we noticed before, Guy Debord ([1967] 2014) argued that modern life is an ‘accumulation of spectacles’ (p. 2), and each spectacle has altered the experience of living into a representation, an inversion of life; non-living. Imagine all the remaining coats of the pre-crisis era in Athens as an accumulation of inactivated layers of this spectacle. It is a spectacle that can no longer be reached. We then discuss a skin from its ruins. That is the era of anti-spectacle.

Considering Borges’s story, *On Exactitude in Science* (1946), and the relation between the map and the territory, the map covered and superseded the terrain that it represented. If the Greek crisis had come to cover the prior reality of commodities and products, namely the society of the spectacle through consumption, the skin of traces that covers and takes the place of the concrete map would be the anti-spectacle.

6.7 The Athenian Derma: the urban collage of the Crisis

If a collage is ‘(a technique of composing) a work of art [produced] by pasting on a single surface various materials not normally associated with one another...’ and ‘an assemblage or occurrence of diverse elements or fragments in unlikely or unexpected juxtaposition’ (‘Collage’, 2012), what kind of urban collage would Athens in crisis be? The surface of the city hosts several contradictory elements that finally find a way to coexist.

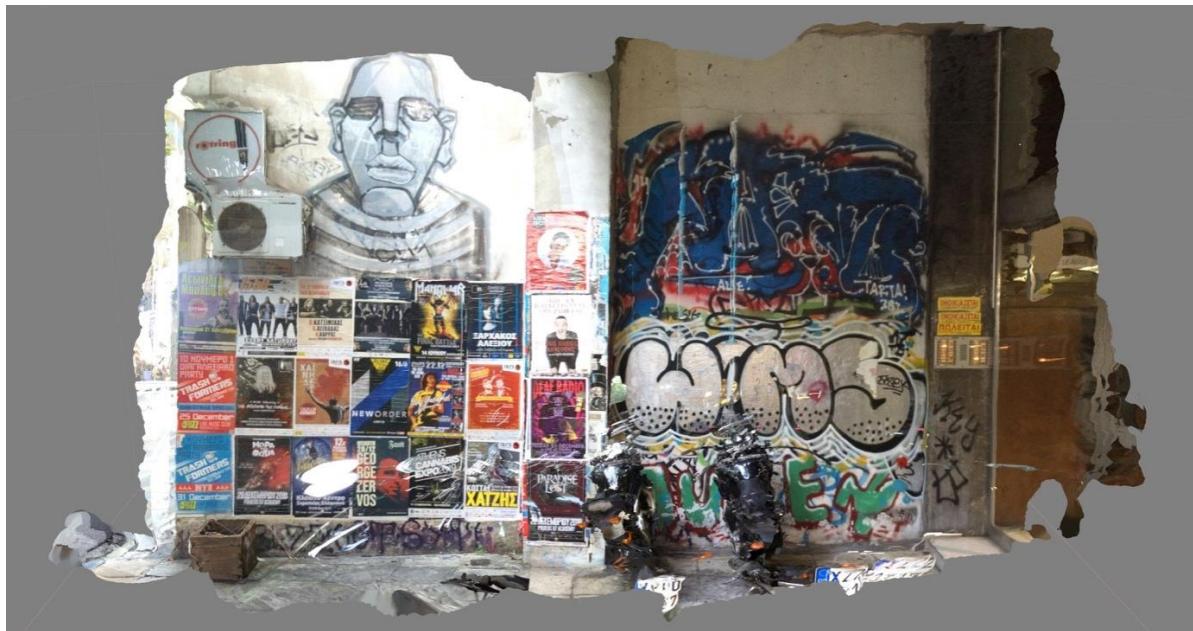


Figure 127 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Urban wall*, December 2018. Photogrammetry/3D model. Themistokleous 42, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

What can an urban collage include? A concurrence of various activities’ outcomes: posters, graffiti, tagging, bubble graffiti, and signs. The above image (fig. 127) bears witness to this coexistence. Let us try to read the image. On the left, closer to the street for further visibility, the eye-level view accommodates a series of posters. Posters must be closer to eye level and more accessible for direct replacement. On top of them, so that no deformation is secured, there is graffiti portraying a face, alongside an air-conditioning box and an abandoned ‘Rotring’ sign. Via Google Maps, I confirmed that in August 2014 this graffiti had already existed, and it has been there ever since. In the middle, a niche hosts posters too. On the right side, mostly hidden and close to the building, there are three bubble graffiti nearly covering the whole wall. Next to them, three yellow papers indicate ‘For Rent’ and ‘For Sale’. The urban skin features a plurality of matters: information, textures, colours, drawing, etc. Various city volumes (objects) also host the urban collage’s activity: walls, pillars, and metal boxes (fig. 128-130).



Figure 128 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *A grey post-box*, December 2019. Photogrammetry/3D model. Themistokleous 46-48 str., Athens, 10677. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 129 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Metal boxes*, July 2019. Photogrammetry/3D model. Solonos & Emmanouil Benaki str., Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

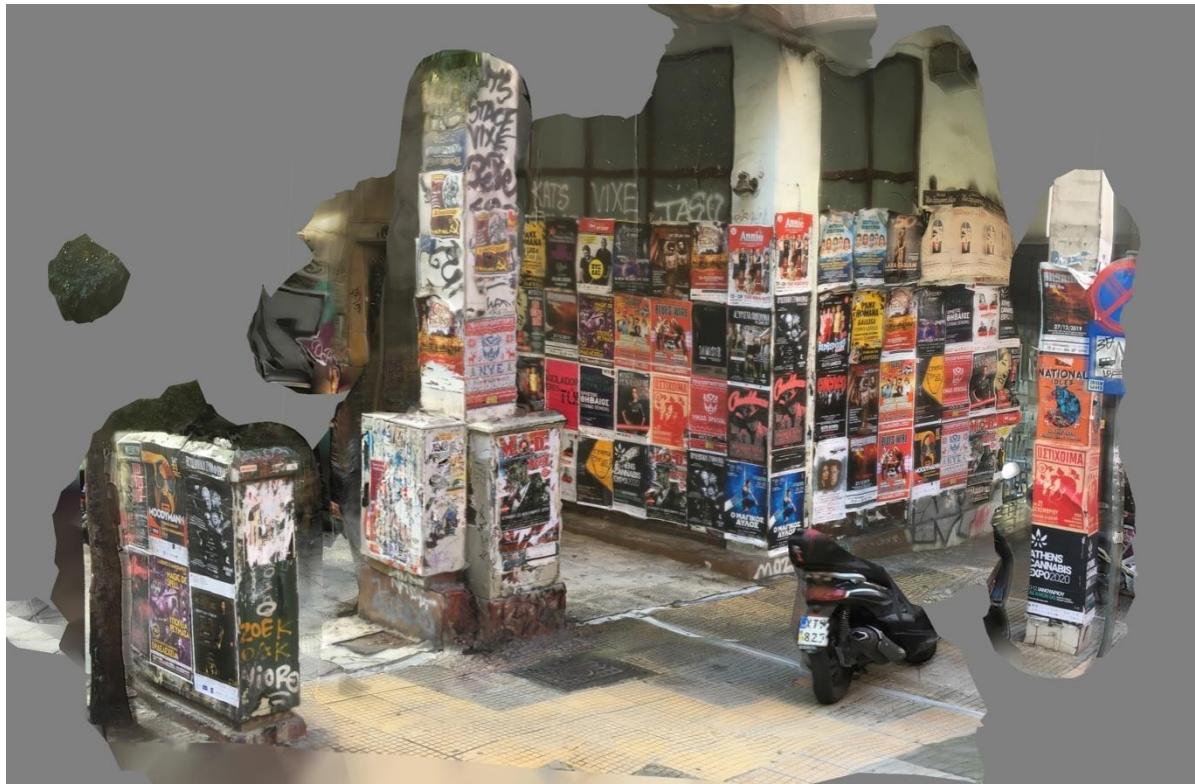


Figure 130 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *A whole corner covered with the skin*, July 2019.

Photogrammetry. Solonos & Emmanouil Benaki str., 10678, Athens. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

What truly makes collage the medium of our epoch is the fact that it reflects and responds to some of modern life's key issues and phenomena. Excess is one of our time's most pressing concerns, as exemplified by the insatiable consumerism and unmanageable amounts of waste, so collage's recycling and repurposing of imagery in a world that is also visually saturated is particularly meaningful.

(Busch and Klanten, 2016, p. 3).

As a collaging development, the skin of Athens may provide an additional dimension to this 'medium of our epoch'. In a place where consumption is inactive and excess can become the proper recycled material, the skin is flourishing. This urban collage consists of layers of the visualised socio-political conditions, and its 'precise aesthetic task is to find ways and channels to express socio-political dissent and critique, as well as anger, in the face of a political system that is increasingly unable to represent social demands' (Campos, Zaimakis, and Pavoni, 2021, p. 6). The ephemeral coatings are continuously changing and redefined due to the additional material stuck on top of one another to portray the different periods of the crisis. Based on this vigorous process, we argue that the urban collage acquires a historical quality, whether the layers are recorded or not. If we were to retrieve any previous

layers of the city's surface, we would have access to a history that was written the very moment it occurred. How would the history of the crisis be preserved in our time, when the vanishing of a feeling of history is how 'our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its past' (Jameson, 1985, p. 125)? If we were to utilise the visualised information of this always-updated collage, we would be able to restore history (the past) from the layers of the surface of the city.

6.8 The urban collage on the walls of the big city

The unlimited field of poetic achievement

The organic surface of Athens, rich in trace activity under incessant change, can be examined in response to Leo Malet's statement in 1969, referring to the 'collage of the future'. It can be a condensed summary for perceiving the idea of Athens as an immense urban collage:

The collage of the future will be executed without scissors or razors or glue, etc.

In short: without any of the utensils that were necessary until now. It will leave behind the worktable and the artist's cardboard surfaces and it will take its place on the walls of the big city, the unlimited field of poetic achievements.

(Malet, 1969, p. 421).

Malet puts the tools (technology) used for its execution first. The very initial sentence is a prediction of the radical change in mediums and technology of this future collage (Buchloh, 1991, p. 98). As far as my hypothesis on 'urban collage' is concerned, this sentence may raise a twofold correspondence. On the one hand, the variety of mediums involved in its production (spray-paint, posters, etc.) and the surfaces engaged—apart from the walls, even the pavements and various city volumes (post boxes, buildings' entrances, columns, etc.) are included. In brief, that is the field within which my city-roaming and fieldwork are realised, providing the collected material for research. On the other hand, the technology I use does not only aim at recording but also at interpreting and transforming both this raw digital material and the experience of wandering into new forms. The shift from the artist's 'worktable' and 'cardboard' (the canvas) to the 'walls of the big city' may raise a new question through my research case regarding Malet's 'collage of the future': is there an intentional collage maker in Athens? Who is this maker when all this activity is bound to the crisis and its echo and not to mere artistic interventions? Is the crisis finally the maker, sparking the human hand towards urban interventions? Although I examine fragments

(spots) of the city as case studies, I finally review the activity as a whole. Any ephemeral trace equally advocates the city collage and produces the skin of Athens in crisis.

6.9 The role of the poster in the ‘anti-spectacle’

The urban poster in Athens of crisis has a twofold role: it is a solid constructive material for building up the ‘skin of the city’, due to its immense proliferation, and a vehicle for socio-political messages. This poster resists any of a poster’s previous uses as a servant of advertising and commerce.

How could, however, the current Athenian poster differentiate itself from the past posters’ exploitation and demonstrate uniqueness in the present spatiotemporal context of Athens in crisis? In WWII, after the Nazi occupation, the walls of the big city would be exploited as a vehicle for political propaganda and fascistic forbidding—any disobedience could cost human lives. After the war, the same walls would accommodate another kind of propaganda, an undetectable form of violence: the recently invented tactics of advertisement aimed at reviving consumerism in the 1950s (Buchloh, 1991, p. 98). In post-war Europe, artists dealt with emerging capitalism and mass consumerism and attacked the ‘society of the spectacle’, as Guy Debord would call it; an indicative example was the *décollagists*, who sought the physical ripped posters of the urban hoardings to divert their advertising status (Butler and de Zegher, 2010, p. 95). The idea of the torn piece of a poster, in collage and *décollage*, embraced a physical appropriation and material revival.

If the poster in post-war France was a tool of consumption, the *décollagists*’ decision to tear it apart was their response against the spectacle. The *décollage* was a depicted response to the moment that the commodity and its mediums of publicity had invaded every surface of social life. What did *décollage* do to act as a critic of the spectacle and attach it?

Moreover, we are not dealing with one poster but a veritable mattress of posters, myriad skins whose identity has been destroyed by irregular tearing (carried out over time): the strata merge into one another; the lettering grafts together; the words cannibalise one another; information is little by little reduced to undifferentiated noise.

(Bois, 1997, p. 178).

Over the years of Greece's recession, where the poster is unable to have a real advertising role, any decollaging act is constructive: it releases new and 'fresh' space for urban activity, and all the merged ingredients into one new form lead to the idea of the derma. My investigation aims at unveiling this new identity: the poster is to be seen as a narrator of the socio-political and, at the same time, a building-up material of Athens's current imagery.

In the course of this thesis, I have been considering that the decision to reclaim outdated city material (e.g., used and deteriorated posters) may not be generally interesting for anyone as far as further physical exploitation is concerned. Besides, a poster has a short time limit; when it is unsuccessful in fulfilling its purpose, its failure is irreparable; its inextricable destiny is to become scrap paper (Price, 1922, p. 364).

Even if the Athenian city poster finally ends up in the garbage, has it failed? It played a political role, even if it has not succeeded in fighting against the crisis; it is the visible proof of the anti-spectacle, the spectacle in the field of the city that collapsed. From a material point of view, the obsolete posters could probably be used as recycled material or in the work of a promising collagist based on a revival of décollage in a current political sphere. But, in general, what kind of physical utilisation may a writing, a slogan, or a tagging offer, indeed in its deteriorated form? In that respect, digital preservation and documentation may contribute a layer (or layers) of Athens contemporary idiosyncrasy in an always changeable mode subject to human intervention. This material also nourishes an innovative way to further develop the practice before the traces are extinct due to vanishing tactics by the authorities. This case, addressed as 'the clean city', will be examined in the following pages.

Chapter 7 The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies

The idea of ‘the clean city’ suggests the decisive act of the Athenian official authorities to remove (or attempt to reduce) the skin of the city in favour of political promotion. In this discussion, special emphasis will be laid on municipal authorities’ clean tactics that have taken place in the last few years since October 2019, given that they coincide with my research, and overlap with each other. Since the beginning of his nomination, the recent mayor, Kostas Bakoyiannis, has frequently and relentlessly used a very influential social media platform, Instagram, to make clear his intentions on the matter: ‘Our daily task is to clean the large surfaces of Athens [implying ‘the skin’] from smudges’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020h). Any frequent activity of this strategy would be documented through visuals, videos, and images that accompanied the posts. In the above-mentioned post on September 16th (2020h), referring to anti-graffiti cleaning of the archaeological site of Filopappou, the significance of layers is powerful: recent inscriptions with spray-paint vanish from ancient remnants, fragmented pieces of antiquity marbles (2020f). It reminds us of McNeal’s (1991) statement that Athens is a unique example of a capital where there is biased stress placed on antiquity treasures to the detriment of other historical layers (p. 49). Thus, the emphasis is put, for one more time, on reviving antiquity [in the case of the Olympic Games 20 years ago] at the expense of the current layer, which frontally addresses the crisis.

Concerning my research, the municipality’s cleaning decision was taken and started being realised one year after I engaged with the public surfaces of Athens at the PhD level. It certainly affected my research, which had already encompassed 11 years of recordings and documentation of the memory of the crisis. According to Nora (1989), what we name memory today is ‘not memory but already history.’ [...] ‘The quest for memory is the search for one’s history’ (p. 13). Thus, my material engulfed the historic visualisation of the meta-Olympic Games 2004 era through the city’s successive transmutations. It covered the period of the crisis and the brick-and-mortar iconography of the recession. Pierre Nora (1989) remarks that ‘modern memory is, above all, archival and relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, and the visibility of the image’ (p. 13). Nora stresses all the elements that my research embeds in the necessity of archiving the memory, the preservation of the current trace endangered by whitewashing, and the emergency of recording ephemerality due to the trace’s stillborn nature. I left at the end ‘the visibility of

the image', which may have a dipole denotation in the current discussion. On the one hand, the collective memory is infused with the crisis while being encountered and experienced on a common ground: within the public space. On the other hand, the clean strategy of the municipality would promote a new potential achievement: the skin of the crisis is eliminated, and the clean city signals the death of the crisis. Accordingly, an entire layer of Greece's visualised evolution was under threat; the historic palimpsest would be interrupted. Zaimakis (2015b) addresses this matter of 'the visual palimpsest of the political graffiti that emerged during the Greek economic crisis and the role that they play, not only in expressing alternative or deviant political understandings but also in mobilizing oppressed people to be involved in political action' (p. 375). Likewise, as Stavrides (2017) argued before, the stencil images of the crisis were 'stencil-acts', signals that not only arrogated the city but also challenged it; 'calls to struggle and forms of struggle' (p. 166). Thereby, they are not 'smudges' (Bakogiannis, 2020h), as the mayor deliberately names them. How would people react to this cleaning strategy in their attempt to claim their city and be expressed through its urban surfaces in response to the continuous crisis? The contestability on the public surfaces would finally show how the individuals decided to act and produce the most recent political layer of their city's development through time.

Let us remember what has been for Greece an existential enquiry: continuity, layers upon layers, a palimpsest of successive historical stages, a celebration of former ruins. Thus, what I had been dealing with as a current layer of Greece's imagery—present ruins—was then in a state of whitewashing and elimination. Indeed, some of my recordings were made just a few days before the clean services of the municipality eradicated the skin of an area in their effort to reveal the initial architectural form of a building. It was addressed as an act of 'offering' to the public while moving towards a new era for the city. The annihilation of a persistently visualised layer of memory in the name of political promotion carries the risk of manipulating the collective memory and, consequently, history itself. According to Nora (1989), there is a distinction between 'true memory' (immediate), such as the immediately selected traces from the public surfaces, and 'memory transformed by its passage through history' (indirect), which can be controlled or misrepresented at the authority's will. The true memory is the one that 'has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes, and in grained memories' (p. 13), namely a more spontaneous, raw, and pure statement of reality. The 'memory transformed by its passage through history' is the adverse: 'voluntary and deliberate, experienced as a duty, no longer spontaneous; psychological, individual, and

The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies subjective; but never social, collective, or all-encompassing’ (1989, p. 13). This can be the history written by mass media serving the authorities (and the authorities themselves, e.g., through their social media), sterilised and deprived of the social and collective echo.

In the following pages, the prominent components of this discussion will be: First, how my research crosses into a frontal dialogue with the official authorities’ clean actions; second, how the extinction of a current layer of public intervention could eliminate a historic stage that bore socio-political connotations as a visual response to the crisis. And final, the reaction to this decision: a new contested space on the whitewashed (offered anew) surfaces laid bare. My methodological keys were developed through visuals and documentation. These include on-site fieldwork and recording; a virtual ‘fieldwork’ following the social media of the official authorities (e.g., the Instagram profile of the major of Athens, Kostas Bakogiannis) or political adversaries; and the mass electronic media.

7.1 Former attempts by the authorities to vanish the Athenian skin: an unsuccessful story from the past

Before examining the current mayor’s operations to reduce the skin of Athens via cleaning, a decision that coincides with and affects my research, I will summarise similar attempts made by his predecessor. Thereby, I will embark on connecting two successive layers of cleaning strategies. As the skin is developed in a layering process, the authorities struggle to eliminate it has also been the political venture of two concurrent mayors, namely two historic layers against the skin.

On March 23, 2016, the former mayor of Athens, George Kaminis, launched a campaign by the Municipality for the removal of graffiti from important streets and landmarks in the capital. The cleaning began from the wall of the Ancient Cemetery of Athens, in the pedestrian street of Ermou. Cleaning crews of the Municipality of Athens and volunteers cleaned this emblematic part of the city from graffiti with professional techniques (Newsroom, 2016). The decision of the place and the article’s reference to an ‘emblematic’ point implies a symbolism of this strategic germinal action: the walls that envelop the ancient identity must be cleaned (although they are part of the most recent culture: just cement). In his statement, Kaminis (2016) called on all his fellow citizens to participate in the cleansing of the city ‘from the smudge’, as ‘this is an image that deserves Athens’. He also stressed that ‘it is a great multi-year struggle in which we want the residents and the active groups of

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citizens close to us. We want to guard the public space'. It is important to see how the official authorities of the city called the trace a 'smudge' [the same rhetoric and vocabulary would be adopted by his successor as well]. Through this call, the mayor shifted the responsibility to his 'fellow citizens' to participate in this action. Besides any political implication for public involvement and a sense of communal contribution (massive and widespread), there might also have been a hint of the extension of the phenomenon of urban interventions, namely that it has been encountered everywhere. Pangalos (2014) refers to this inconceivable density of visual interventions of any kind on the vertical spaces of Athens, rendering the city a unique case of urban appropriation worldwide (p. 154). Yet, who would be these 'active groups' to participate in the 'struggle' of painting (Kaminis, 2016), when the citizen was struggling for their everyday life or other active groups had been expressing their struggle on the city surfaces? These operations were promoted through visuals in the press (fig. 131-134) and the mayor himself, who smiles in front of a painting activity (fig. 134). In the background, the unpainted part of the wall indicates various urban activities, such as torn posters and tagging.



Figure 131 Nikos Libertas, *Untitled*, 2016. Photography. First Public Cemetery of Ancient Athens.

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The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies



Figure 132 Nikos Libertas, Untitled, 2016. Photography. First Public Cemetery of Ancient Athens.

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Figure 133 Nikos Libertas, Untitled, 2016. Photography. First Public Cemetery of Ancient Athens.

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The former mayor, George Kaminis, poses for a photo smiling, whereas the cleaning crew behind him paints a wall. On the left, we notice the grey already painted wall, while on the right, we notice several inscriptions in various colours and shapes and remnants of posters (fig. 134).



Figure 134 Nikos Libertas, *Untitled*, 2016. Photography. First Public Cemetery of Ancient Athens.

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7.2 A brief overview of how the current mayor, Kostas Bakogiannis, uses social media (Instagram) in favour of the cleaning strategy

Concerning the present mayor of Athens (since October 2019), I examined how social media, as a direct way to communicate with the public, are used by the authorities in favour of political promotion. Kostas Bakoyannis regularly posts pictures of civic activities relating to cleaning the city on his Instagram profile (with 105 thousand followers). Numerous comments approve and thank the mayor, whereas others are totally against him and his operations. Cleaning the surface of the city of the crisis was thus used as a promotion of catalytic actions against the crisis. These walls belong to the common space, but the crisis resides underneath the surface; any brightness is only superficial. This battle against posters

The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies (2019, 2020b) or ‘anti-graffiti’ (2019, 2020c, 2020e) policy, as the mayor mentions, serves political advertising. However, the prior mayor’s efforts that we saw above failed to clean the city. Even the places he intended to clean, such as Patission Str. in the city centre (2020e) and other major highways (Kaminis, 2016), were to be written again, embedding the socio-political reflections of each period. If the crisis does not end, the marks and posters will always find their way to inhabit the city.

At first glance, Kostas Bakoyannis’s Instagram profile provides an overview of the cleaning strategy starting in October 2019. It initially included the cleaning of pavements, statues, street metal fences, and pillars. On December 23, 2019, Bakoyannis posted several images (fig. 135) that display posters’ ungluing. The mayor’s comment mentions that ‘we welcome Christmas without posters and dirty walls; with anti-graffiti operations, a clean city is “comme il faut” (as it must be)’.

Three days before, on December 20, 2019, I had recorded this wall in Emmanouil Benaki Str., and produced a 3D model reviving the scenery (fig. 136). In fact, I documented the extensive length and the dynamic of the paper layers to cover and expand over the cement and metal surfaces. Visual details of this expansion are provided below (fig. 136) before the skin was removed by the municipality just three days later.



Figure 135 Unknown, Cleaning operation against ‘poster pollution’, December 2019. Photography. Emmanouil Benaki str., 10678, Athens. ©Kostas Bakoyannis.



Figure 136 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Details of a 3D model focused on the poster's part of the wall*, 2020. Photogrammetry. Emmanouil Benaki str., Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

Through his post on February 25, 2020, the mayor made clear that the cleaning strategy is a conscious decision to put an end to the ‘imprint of misery’ in public places. ‘Let’s bring back the aesthetic and cleanliness in the city. Pollution is not an art’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020a). The mayor’s lexicon around the urban trace varies from a ‘smudge’ (2020h) to the ‘imprint of misery’ (2020a, 2020e). But the misery has been spread by the government’s austerity measures, for almost 12 years through the recession. The city is the mirror of a still-active crisis. The mayor also made use of the word ‘pollution’ for the traces in juxtaposition with ‘art’. Certainly, it was based on the use of ‘graffiti’ as a generalised term. Yet the slogans or the posters were not embedded on the city surfaces to demonstrate a mastery of art or artistic skills or to aestheticise the buildings, so they were somehow judged with aesthetic criteria. Each trace, spray-painted or materially stuck, bears witness to the condition of the crisis.

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The first month of Greece’s lockdown (due to the COVID-19 crisis) was exploited for further cleaning. The mayor’s post of March 28, 2020 (fig. 137) denotes this period, starting with the motto against the coronavirus pandemic: ‘We Stay at Home’. It ‘became the opportunity to proceed to more extended cleaning operations. Like this one yesterday against the poster pollution in Emmanouil Benaki Str., Charilaou Trikoupi Str., Solomou, and Hippocratous Str.’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020b).



Figure 137 Unknown, Cleaning operation against ‘poster pollution’, March 2020. Photography. Athens’s city centre. ©Kostas Bakoyiannis.

The cleaning strategy has also attempted to connect the historic past of the city with the current image and the omnipresent traces to further establish and promote the vanishing of this imagery. On June 24, 2020, the mayor posted on Instagram a video relevant to cleaning the walls of a principal Athenian thoroughfare, Patission Str. His description discusses one

of the biggest anti-graffiti operations taking place in Athens. In Patission Str. the aim was to clean both sides of the street from ‘the surfaces that fill the city up with... misery’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020e). The video refers to the historicity of the street as ‘one of the most historical streets of Athens that was charted in 1908’, displaying a flashback of those days in black-and-white. Immediately after, the video takes up to the current era (‘After 112 years’), showing images of overwritten walls and the doors of the Polytechnic School, informing us that ‘on June 16 an important effort has started’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020e). It is essential to notice the mayor’s reference to the plan ‘Adopt your city’; a programme that involves the participation of the private sector, such as *Karcher Greece*, and ‘drives everyone to be part of the changes that the city needs’ (2020e).

7.3 ‘Adopt the city of crisis and clean it’: the private sector in favour of cleaning the city

The professional cleaning company *Karcher*, which operates worldwide (2022), participated in the municipal programme ‘Adopt Your City’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020e). *Karcher Greece* posted on Instagram (June 24, 2020) images of professional cleaners with professional equipment while cleaning the city. The ending spot was referring to ‘so the beautiful Athens is not a memory; it is in our hands; when we are together, our streets will become more beautiful’ (Karcher, 2020b). As far as *Karcher*’s business involvement in cleaning is concerned, we read on their official site: ‘Athens changes “face”’ [so the skin of Athens is about to be transformed]. And follows: ‘Thanks to the programme “Adopt Your City”, residents and visitors, citizens and enterprises, and the public and private sectors, we are all united for a clean, accessible, and viable Athens.’ (2020d). *Karcher* is a proud sponsor of the programme ‘Adopt Your City’ and has adopted Patission tr. They contributed their equipment and expertise to clean surfaces from graffiti, scribbles (referring to ‘tagging’), slogans and posters on the façades of the stores in Patission Str. Starting by June 15, 2020, they aimed to ‘remove graffiti and dirtiness from the walls and pavements, revitalising one of the historical streets of Athens...’ (2020a). Again, on June 24, 2020, *Karcher Greece* posted several images on their Instagram account (fig. 138-140) promoting their cleaning operations. According to the post description, the ‘before’ (upper image) and ‘after’ (lower image) display the image of the cleaned spots after two weeks of removing graffiti, painting surfaces with anti-graffiti protective material, and pavement cleaning in Patission str., from Panepistiou Str. to Veranzerou Str. (2020b).

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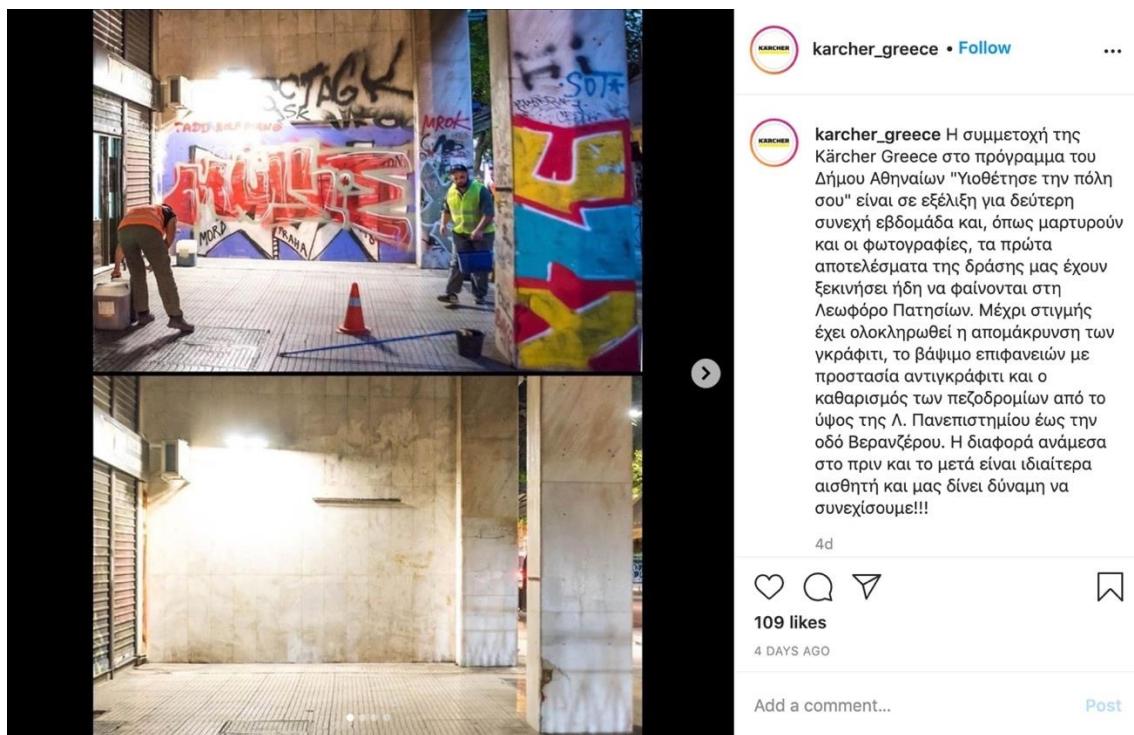


Figure 138 Karcher Greece, Cleaning operation of Patission str. 'before' and 'after', 2020. Photography. From Panepistimiou to Veranzerou str., 10677, Athens. ©Karcher Greece.

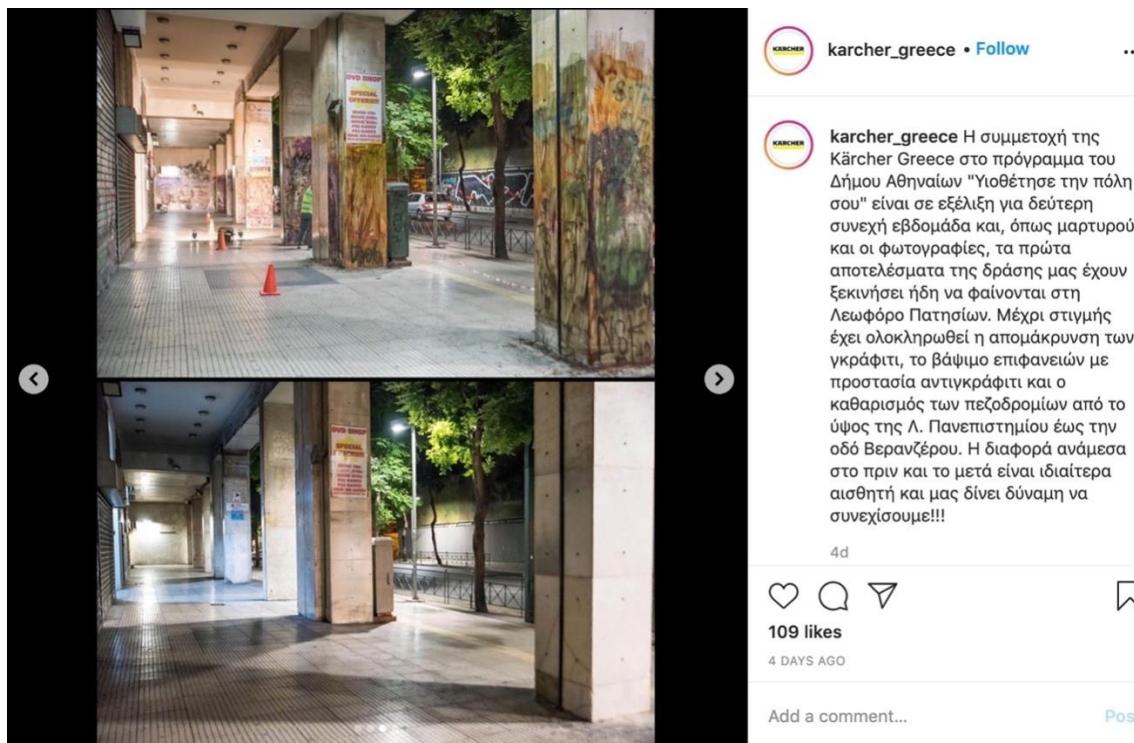


Figure 139 Karcher Greece, Cleaning operation of Patission str. 'before' and 'after', 2020. Photography. From Panepistimiou to Veranzerou str., 10677, Athens. ©Karcher Greece.

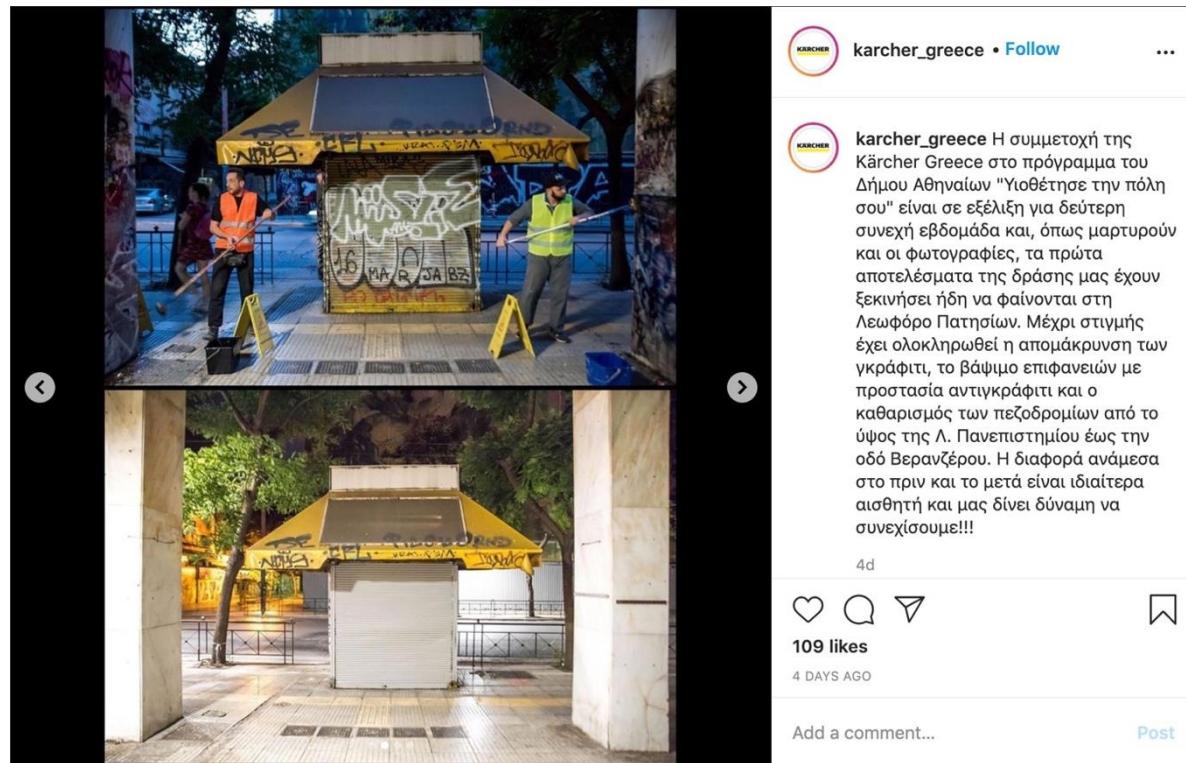


Figure 140 *Karcher Greece, Cleaning operation of Patission str. 'before' and 'after', 2020. Photography. From Panepistimiou to Veranzerou str., 10677, Athens. ©Karcher Greece.*

During the same period, on June 21, 2020, further cleaning took place, according to the mayor's Instagram profile. The mayor's description on the right side of the below post (fig. 141) says: 'For the past six months, Cleanliness Sundays have become part of every neighbourhood. They became our way of cleaning Athens as a whole, on every street and sidewalk. Our whole mechanism today is in Kolonos. Clean from end to end' (2020d).

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Figure 141 Unknown, Cleaning operation of the Public Tobacco Factory [«Δημόσιο Καπνεργοστάσιο»], 2020. Photography. Lenorman 218, 10443, Athens. ©Kostas Bakoyannis.



Figure 142 Unknown, Cleaning operation of Ag. Georgios sqr., 2020. Photography. Pl. Agiou Georgiou 9, Athens, 11257. ©Kostas Bakoyannis.

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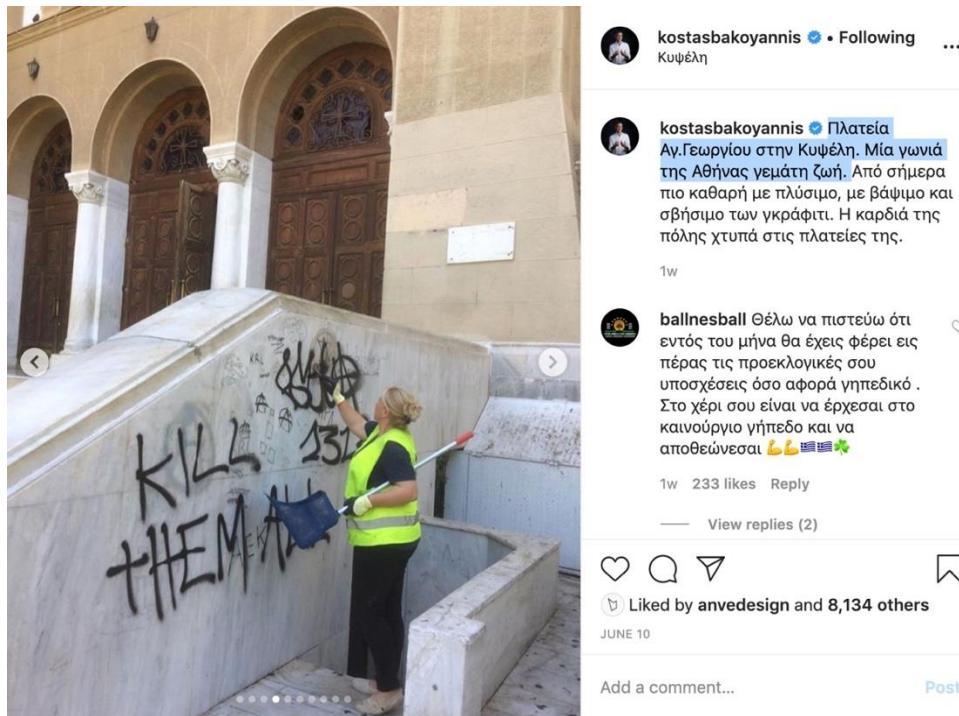


Figure 143 Unknown, Cleaning operation of Ag. Georgios sqr., 2020. Photography. Pl. Agiou Georgiou 9, 11257, Athens. ©Kostas Bakoyannis.

The two above images (fig. 142-143) were posted on the mayor's Instagram profile on June 8, 2020. The description mentions that 'Agios Georgios Square in Kypseli is a corner of Athens full of life. From today on, the square is cleaner thanks to washing, painting, and erasing graffiti' (2020c).

The mayor's post shown in the below image (fig. 144) mentions: 'The historic "Pil-Pul" building was handed over clean and tidy by the Municipality of Athens after a major anti-graffiti operation. We revived the original wonderful face of the building, which is today an important cultural reference point for Athens' (2020c).



Figure 144 Unknown, Cleaning operation of ‘Pil-Pul’ building, 2020. Photography. Thessalonikis 38, 11854, Athens. ©Kostas Bakoyiannis.

7.4 Cleaning the skin, Reviving the Skin

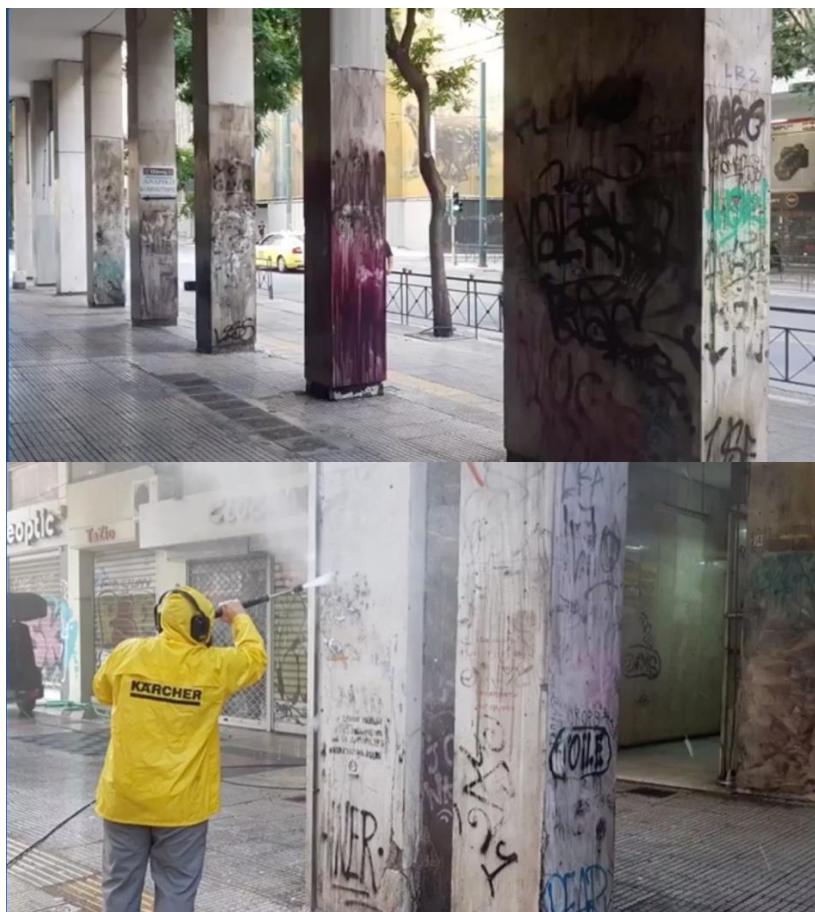
On July 1, 2020, Karcher Greece, in charge of cleaning part of the city centre, posted on Instagram a message of pride about the revivification of Athens:

We are very proud of our participation in the action of the revitalization of Patission Str., which is implemented within the programme ‘Adopt Your City’ of the Municipality of Athens. It started on June 16 and will last for 7 weeks in total, taking place from the height of Omonia Square to Alexandras Avenue. The cleaning is done by special cleaning teams at hours when the shops are closed. It includes washing with a high-pressure hot-cold water cleaning machine, the use of a water jet for hard surfaces, as well as preventive coating with graffiti protectors.

(Karcher Greece, 2020c).

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Even unconsciously and without having such an intention, Karcher Greece also contributed a layer to the Athenian skin. The washing with ‘a high-pressure hot-cold water cleaning machine, the use of a water jet for hard surfaces...’ was one more urban intervention. It was an operation to which the skin was submitted, and the cleaning may offer a blank surface for a revived skin when the socio-political imperatives require space for expression anew. The reference to a ‘preventive coating with graffiti protectors’ merely divulges an additional coat of a liquid pigment, such as glues, acrylics or spray-paints. Although it is applied to preventing or stopping the new graffiti layers, an idea of resistance emerges: will it be the final and unique layer from now on? Will it be so resilient? When or what will be the first future inscribed writing? Finally, this layer of cleaning and painting will also be part of the history of the skin: in those days the prior skin vanished, and a new condition arose. The following still shots (fig. 145) capture Karcher Greece’s operations as they were posted on the company’s Instagram profile on July 1, 2020. They are relevant to the cleaning of Patission Str. (in the city centre) including both the ‘before’ and ‘after’ images of the city.



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Figure 145 Karcher Greece, Cleaning of Patission str., Athens's city centre, 2020. Video. Karcher's Instagram profile. ©Karcher Greece.

7.5 Understanding the authorities' cleaning strategy: selected data from the mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyiannis, Instagram profile

Selected data from the mayor's Instagram profile, Kostas Bakoyiannis, was examined to have an immediate and direct image of the rhetoric, the arguments, and the specific vocabulary that was used to support the official authorities' clean strategy. This data bank covers a period from August 2020 to April 2021 and links the former period of research that culminated in the 'Grand Promenade' (further discussed in the next section, 7.6, 'The Subversive Collage') with the present discussion on the following months' operations. It mostly centres on cleaning activities relevant to the skin of Athens, emphasising specific ingredients such as graffiti, posters, etc. Nonetheless, there are numerous other posts relevant to cleaning in general (e.g., washing the streets, school disinfections, renewal of public plastic waste bins, etc.). From August 2020 to April 2021, 49 posts were made relevant to general cleaning, and 13 of them (September 2020–March 2021) were particularly related to anti-graffiti operations and poster pollution. However, as the skin of a city may not only be addressed to the vertical urban constructions, it is also essential to refer in brief to the emergency (for the mayor) of posting numerous posts per month relevant to cleaning in general. Indicatively, from 1st to 30th September, in a total of 40 posts, 9 posts dealt with cleaning; from 1st to 30th November, in a total of 34 posts, 7 posts dealt with cleaning; from 1st to 16th April 2021, in a total of 14 posts, 4 posts dealt with cleaning; and so on. The posts were tailored to political rhetoric aimed at courageous and decisive speech. Let us see, for

The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies instance, the post of September 6, 2020: ‘Cleaning Sundays have returned. They became a tradition, the mirror of how we clean Athens—overwhelmingly, in total, everywhere. The powerful clean team of the municipality carries on attempting and offering the city clean to its citizens’ (Bakogiannis, 2020g). All the posts are accompanied by plenty of professionally captured images or short videos (even 10 in number) as visual evidence of the operations.

Below, I focus especially on specific cleaning operations, including only the vertical surfaces of the city (walls, shopfronts, pillars, etc.). Taping into the collected data, I attempt to make clear the official authorities’ point of view and further understand it by discussing its arguments. Any extracted information can assist in further grasping the position of the skin, its controversial role as a contested space, and how it is perceived from various sides.

Table 4 Selected data from Kostas Bakoyiannis, the current mayor of Athens, Instagram profile, from the 11th of September 2020 to the 30th of March 2021

Date/ Year	Activity	Visuals	Bakoyiannis statement	Area
11/09/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	7 images- short videos	‘Cleaning of the large surfaces in Solonos str. and Dafnomili str.. We are tidying up the city, step by step, from the smudge and the poster pollution. Daily.’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CE_n-dQF_eL/	City centre
16/09/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	9 images- short videos	‘One more of our daily operations to clean the large surfaces of Athens from smudges. This time, at the archeological site of Philopappos hill.’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CFM0n9ulj3B/	Philopappos monument
22/09/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	5 images- short videos	‘This is the image we want [for our city] and it comes true every day. One more operation to clean the large surfaces of the city. We started from Omonia sq., Patision str., and reached the National Technical University of Athens. We did it with the valuable help of @karcher_greece that participates in the program “Adopt your city”.’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CFbvtmBl9-M/	City centre

13/10/2020	Commission of official graffiti	11 images-short videos	<p>‘A new, large mural gave color to Thessaloniki Str., across “Technopolis”. Organized and curated by Urban Act with our support. We can give color to the city in such ways, organised and coordinated. We will continue to do this in other parts of Athens. We offer the chance of expression to all artists, with respect to the city.’</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CGSSYakFP7Z/</p>	Technopolis area
16/10/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	9 images-short videos	<p>‘One more operation in progress to clean 24 large surfaces from graffiti in all the 7 Municipal Communities. We started from the 1st, at the NIMTS hospital and the 6th, at EOKA sqr., Delvinou str., Pedion Areos and we continue.’</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CGaFas8FF6G/</p>	City centre
24/10/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	9 images-short videos	<p>‘The anti-graffiti operation is in progress throughout Athens. From the 6th Municipal Community on Skyrou Str. in Kypseli, and the 2nd in Neos Kosmos in Plyta Sqr., until the 7th, in Polygono and Gypari Sqr. but also the 4th in Kato Patisia area. Let's go for 24 points in this phase and continue!’</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuWa0elE8S/</p>	Various areas throughout the city
26/11/2020	Against poster pollution	6 images-short videos	<p>‘These days when the traffic in Athens is reduced [quarantines due to the pandemic], it is a great opportunity to intensify our effort to rid the city of poster pollution. Pillars, walls and large surfaces, from Themistokleous str. to Acharnon str., and from Patisia str. to Zoodochou Pigis str., were the target of the strong cleaning team of Athens.’</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CIDagYFFFhC/</p>	City centre
28/11/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	10 images-short videos	<p>‘Everything changes when the real face of the city is revealed, step by step, hidden behind images that blurred its characteristics. One more anti-graffiti operation in our neighborhoods. Every day, in kindergartens, in stadiums, squares, hills and where needed to bring the colors of Athens to the surface.’</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CIleFTflny/</p>	City centre
09/12/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	10 images-short videos	<p>‘Athens has been waiting for many years for an extensive operation [cleaning]. Anti-graffiti is taking place in 3,300 sq.m. in Stadiou str., from Omonia sqr. to Syntagma sqr.. It includes the roller shutters of the shops, the shopfronts, and the marbles. Everywhere. These operations are done on all roads for the first time, to make the city shine, not only from its [Christmas] decoration, but also from its clean surfaces.’</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/CIkfnNYFv1M/</p>	Stadiou str. from Omonia to Syntagma sq.

29/12/2020	Anti-graffiti cleaning	8 images-short videos	‘It is a breath for the historic buildings, the shops and the large surfaces of Ermou str., which were cleaned during an extensive anti-graffiti operation, in an area of 1,700sqm. These operations have now become a daily task for the city. The most commercial street of Athens is not only decorated [for Christmas] but also clean.’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CJYL8UHl7ve/	City centre Ermou str.
25/12/2021	Anti-graffiti cleaning	8 images	‘Akademias str. was also scanned. All its large surfaces, roller shutters, pillars and walls were cleaned of graffiti smudges. With this one completed, we count 40 anti-graffiti operations throughout Athens, where a total of 19,000 sq.m are cleaned. Ermou str., Patision str., Stadiou str., Anafiotika area, and many spots of Athens are just the beginning!’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CKdjZm-lidQ/	City centre
02/02/2021	Anti-graffiti cleaning	7 images	‘Athens responds to the smudge with cleanliness. Anti-graffiti in the Emporiko Trigono area and we continue...’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CKyrh_Ii9JP/	City centre
30/03/2021	Anti-graffiti cleaning	7 images shown the before and after cleaning process	‘For many months now, the struggle, against the smudge that has been blackening the large surfaces of the city for years, has begun. Ermou str., Stadiou str., a large part of Patission str., Anafiotika and dozens of other places, are cleaned with anti-graffiti and washing. We have used a special anti-graffiti film that allows us to keep the surfaces clean. We have also offered spaces for the real art of graffiti and artistic expression. Another 10 neighborhoods of Athens have found their colour again. We have not finished yet, but we do not stop.’ https://www.instagram.com/p/CNCcO9fFfWE/	City centre

First, I attempt to trace indications of the skin of the city that address its corporeality. I juxtapose the official authorities’ rhetoric and arguments (relying on the above table) and act as a ‘reader’ of the underlying meanings. To begin with, the mayor often repeats the phrase ‘the large surfaces [of Athens]’, referring to the extension of the phenomenon of visual appropriation. The phrase denotes an idea of skin through the acknowledgement of its omnipresence and immensity, yet no name or term has been given (lack of terminology) apart from ‘[large] surface’. The adoption of the term ‘surface’ is correct, provided that the walls of the buildings are in a sense the ‘surface of the city’; they set the limits, the clear material borderline, what separates the inside from the outside, namely the private from the public (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 3). By using the word ‘surface’, the mayor defines his field of

activity: the public sphere. The word ‘surface’ can also refer to an area targeted by a ‘writer’ or ‘artist’ (Lewisohn, 2008, p. 15), so graffiti makers or street artists are possibly delineated as actors, and their outcomes are what the mayor is summoned to fight against. However, the repeated reference to ‘the large surfaces’ may also imply the call of duty and responsibility and can be portrayed in one of his following statements: ‘We have not finished yet [with cleaning the surfaces], but we do not stop’. This declaration can also serve as a political excuse if the venture is finally unsuccessful. An indirect implication for the skin is expressed through spatiotemporal statements. On the one hand, there are references to places, spaces, urban objects, constructions, and surfaces. The account of ‘the archaeological site of Pilopappos’, and its cleaning from contemporary graffiti reveals the intersection of various temporal eras through traces that co-exist. ‘A breath for the historic buildings’ certainly suggests that respecting historical features is undeniable. Other references include: ‘the roller shutters, pillars, and walls [that] were cleaned off graffiti smudges’, ‘the shopfronts, and the marbles’ and equally places: ‘in kindergartens, in stadiums, squares, hills, the roller shutters of the shops’, namely ‘Everywhere’. The extension of the skin is stressed and better summarized in the word ‘everywhere’. On the other hand, there are references to how time developed the skin or how the skin needed time—multiple layers—to come into being: ‘Athens has been waiting for many years for an extensive operation [cleaning]’. ‘For many months now, the struggle against the smudge that has been blackening the large surfaces of the city for years has begun’. Both spatiotemporal accounts address the extensiveness of the phenomenon not only in space but also in time. The declaration that ‘these operations are done on all roads for the first time’ promotes the mayor as a pioneer.

Indeed, the use of language serves in favour of this promotion and asserts the mayor’s rights over the city. Terms such as ‘tidy up [the city]’ and ‘get rid of [poster pollution]’ suggest a sense of authority that is non-negotiable. ‘Step by step’ and ‘[cleaning is] a daily task for the city’ affirm orderliness. ‘The smudge’ may show incompetence to describe the phenomenon; acting as an abstract term, a ‘smudge’ may imply ‘dirtiness’. The insistence on the use of ‘one more operation’ repeatedly points out the massiveness and perseverance of the cleaning interventions—the mayor’s omnipotence.

The authority’s supremacy is also featured in statements such as ‘the image we want [for our city]’, where ‘we’ implies all of us, ignoring the fact that the discussed urban imagery was the fruit of how the crisis had impacted people. The connection with our cityscape is subjective, culturally, and historically determined as a result of the way that different people

and groups interact with it and, at the same time, understand and make sense of it (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 316). This ‘we’ would never include anyone referring to the common urban surfaces of a city in crisis. The walls of the buildings affect the image of the city as well as how people experience it; they reflect cultural and aesthetic choices and, concurrently, bear on them the traces of the actions that made use of them and changed them (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 317). Thus, when the mayor refers to ‘the real face of the city [that] is revealed hidden behind images that blur its characteristics’, he certainly alludes to the architectural surfaces and their material form. Yet he deliberately omits that ‘the real face of the city’ reflects the socio-political and cultural agents that the citizens have experienced. Statements such as ‘to make the city shine... from its clean surfaces’ and ‘... neighbourhoods of Athens have found their colour again’ make one wonder if the cleanliness of the surface would heal the deeper detritus of the crisis. Finally, one may wonder what ‘the real colour’ of Athens is when the imagery of the crisis is full of colour (spray paints, posters, etc.). Another agent of persuasion is when the mayor speaks in the name of Athens as if he were the city itself: ‘Athens responds to the smudge with cleanliness’. Here Athens is personified; the mayor is [incarnating] Athens, and everything he does is what Athens itself wants.

One more essential factor is the use of a vocabulary that signifies a partial understanding of what the iconography of Athens is. There is a gap when using terminologies either to simplify the meanings of the posts and make them easier accessible to the public or because of a lack of perception of reality. All the operations are called either ‘anti-graffiti’ or ‘poster pollution’. Thereby, any urban activity is classified into two categories: ‘graffiti’ or ‘posters’. The use of ‘pollution’ for the posters is how a material, paper-based element of the skin is addressed. According to this, the skin is deprived of the colourful posters that always update the urban surfaces with what occurs in the city, or it loses its socio-political role during the crisis: the poster as a medium of communication for the marginal groups, calls for demonstrations and struggle, etc. It is simply described as ‘pollution’.

The use of ‘graffiti’ for any inscription accommodated on Athenian surfaces is misused. Not everyone who adds a slogan, a tag, or a stencilled message produces graffiti. Nonetheless, terms such as ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’ embed a sense of contestability as they are both contested phenomena (Rudolph, 2016, p. 3). Indeed, the groups that inhabit and experience the spaces of a city claim them, giving them meaning that often comes into conflict with both the dominant meanings and those that other groups address to the same spaces; thus, the urban space is constantly negotiated (Karathanasis, 2010, pp. 316-317). Therefore, the use of ‘graffiti’ may only imply the contested space, provided that the walls become a field

of cultural, political, and social conflicts; in other words, they become ‘disputed areas’ of the city (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 317). Again, the use of ‘graffiti’ or ‘street art’ excludes a great number of people who are in a visual dialogue with the city, and they are not either ‘writers’ or ‘artists’ (or amateurs) that experiment with their art skills. In brief, ‘writer’ refers to an individual engaged in graffiti, whereas ‘artist’ refers to those engaged in street art (Lewisohn, 2008, p. 15, p. 18). The word ‘writer’ may be addressed to people who simply write slogans in a wider sense, as far as the act of writing is concerned and involved. However, they are not graffiti artists. Those who are in dialogue with urban surfaces are not necessarily either of them. The contribution to the skin is larger than what these two terms can describe, as are the precise groups they delineate. For instance, the individuals who are engaged with gluing posters, producing immense coverings of the façades of the closed stores (and any other available surface as well), are not ‘writers’ or ‘artists’. Their connection with the public surfaces is achieved through a ‘ready-made’ material, the poster, produced by others (graphic designer, printer, etc.), in a gluing and ungluing process relentlessly. They glue their material in an unconsciously collage-like process and unglue prior layers (*décollage*), namely adding and removing. They might be paid for that; this is their job, or they support specific political sides expressed through the forwardness of the public space.

Provided that graffiti is ‘an unofficial, unsanctioned application of a medium onto a surface’ (Lewisohn, 2008, p. 15), the mayor declares his willingness to allocate space for its expression. However, it is offered under conditions: ‘organised, curated, coordinated’, thus the expression is controlled, and through selectiveness (proposed artists). Paradoxically, the chance is offered to ‘all artists’, but only if they respect the city—yet one may wonder with what criteria. As I discussed before, the actors that contribute to the skin of the city are not [all] artists. What space for expression would be given to those who protest austerity by circulating their slogans? The mayor’s suggestion remains in the realm of art, besides through the process of deliberate manipulation of art as well: ‘good art’ (controlled) and ‘bad art’ (no permission). This is summarised in his following statement: ‘We have also offered spaces for the real art of graffiti and artistic expression.’ Only to them, nothing else.

7.6 The Subversive Collage

If the surface of the city in crisis, Athens, were examined as a collaged form, that would be the subversive collage. Subversion is the central quality of collage; the collected material is deprived of its principal context, and its embedding in new compositions is an act of subversion, a form of protest (Busch, Klanten, 2016, p. 2). The subversive strand of collage can be examined in the urban sphere of Athens, related to its skin, through how people interact with objects found in the cityscape. Their initial role seems rather obvious and ordinary. Yet, how can they be transformed into socio-political ‘note boards’, expressing a more general disappointment and finally composing an ‘urban collage’ of protest?

This is the case of the recent redevelopment of the historical centre of Athens, the so-called ‘Grand Promenade’, and the new protagonist of the cityscape: the ‘golden jardinières’ that were placed throughout the city centre. As far as the ‘Grand Promenade’ is concerned, the oppositions that started taking place on the 15th of June 2020 were poignant, both for the time that was chosen to initiate the urban interventions and for the traffic problems that resulted in the circulation of Athens centre. The critics of the intervention spoke of work being done in a hurry since the coronavirus pandemic had brought a great reduction in the use of public transport, even with the admonition to avoid the use of public transportation (Karagiannis, 2020).

The 638 smaller jardinières in total, which were added to the ‘Grand Promenade’ in June 2020, cost €508.500 each (Demetis, 2020); the rectangular ones cost €550 and the circular ones €5.000 each. In the market, you may find similar products ten times cheaper, mostly when the order is massive and followed by a generous discount (Sarantakos, 2020). Consequently, the urban space of Athens, the fieldwork of my research, obtained new blank objects. The urban objects and their use as ‘canvases’ for public writing expression have been part of my research, delving into recording and further developing them into virtual models.

In my research, the further exploiting of 3D technology’s potential has been examined to provide numerous ‘hidden’ views of the projects, transcending their initial image and concluding with new forms, objects-‘sculptures’, even in abstract ways. This decision responds to the starting comment of ‘collage as a subversion’—the unlimited new compositions provided via technology and printing potential. The contemporary subversive collage intends to ‘push the boundaries of a medium that holds such power in its poetry and poetry in its power’ (Busch, Klanten, 2016, p. 3). This ‘poetry’ and ‘power’ were finally

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incarnated through the medium (technology and methodology used). Yet, the captured forms (projects) already existed in the material of ‘a city in crisis’, incessantly self-altered, which gives the raw material a precise context; urban poetry and power have to be led one step ahead through visual representations.

However, what would make these forms different from any other 3D model with similar outcomes to mine? I sought these answers by delving into the socio-political context and power of the primary images used, from the initially adopted Athens urban objects. This was a challenge to contribute a different ‘reading’ of the context through a visual production, a reinterpretation of the fabric of current Athens’ history. The suggested body of work has been my contribution to a city; I have been documenting its evolution for almost 14 years since the beginning of the crisis.

Experiencing the crisis through its visual effects in the everyday environment reinforced this quest for finding a subversive form and meaning in the initial collaged material skin. Collage brings together fragments of an artist’s everyday life environment in unforeseen formulations, enforcing new meanings on the initial material and often targeting visual forms of consumption as an act of revolt (Busch, Klanten, 2016, p. 2). In the case of the new jardinières in Athens, it was the city itself [the public] that immediately transformed the objects into a new context by accommodating new slogans, messengers of the general political complaint. For these gilded jardinières and benches, the Municipality of Athens spent 2 million euros from the money of Greek taxpayers at a time when most of society was impoverished by the government lockdowns and citizens fainted from hunger (Dimitrakopoulos, 2020).

If collage is a subversive mode, could the socio-political developments (subversions) of contemporary Athens be seen on the written layers of the collaged city in a literal way? Indeed, the word ‘subversion’ was one of those written on urban objects, the new jardinières, which attracted general criticism due to their high cost. During several demonstrations that took place in Athens on July 7, 2020, a group of people took one down (fig.149) and wrote slogans on others (TANEA Team, 2020). The dominant slogans were: ‘SUBVERSION’ [«ΑΝΑΤΡΟΠΗ»] (fig. 146), ‘UPRISING’ [«ΕΞΕΓΕΡΣΗ»] (fig. 147) and ‘RESISTANCE’ [«ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΣΗ»] (fig. 148). The slogan ‘BURN DOWN THE GHETTOS OF CONSUMPTION’ (fig. 153) is the visualised request of the anti-spectacle: the spectacle [consumption] has no place here. Photos from the anti-graffiti jardinières in the centre of Athens and the written slogans on them went viral in local media (fig. 146-153).



Figure 146 Unknown, *ANATROPI* (subversion), 2020. Photography © avgi.gr 2020.



Figure 147 Unknown, *EXEGERSI* (uprising), 2020. Photography © avgi.gr 2020.



Figure 148 Unknown, *ANTISTASI* (resistance), 2020. Photography ©avgi.gr 2020.



Figure 149 Unknown, The overthrow of the jardinière, 2020. Photography ©tanea.gr 2020.

The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies



Figure 150 EUROKINISI, ‘Justice will be decided on the street’, 2020. Photography. ©Lifo.gr. 2020.



Figure 151 Newsroom, ‘Justice will be decided on the street’, 2020. Photography. ©Newsbomb.gr.



Figure 152 George Vitsaras, 'Uprisings', 2020. Photography ©SOOC/George Vitsaras.



Figure 153 George Vitsaras, 'Burn down the ghettos of consumption', 2020. Photography ©SOOC/George Vitsaras.

These demonstrations resulted in a new bill aiming to restrict the protests. The draft law for ‘public outdoor gatherings and other provisions’ of the Ministry of Citizen Protection was submitted to the Greek Parliament on June 29, 2020, and provided for:

‘a one-year prison sentence for those participating in a rally banned by the police or the Coast Guard and two years for those who infiltrate demonstrations and carry out violent actions, as well as civil sanctions against the organisers to repair the damage…’, among other provisions.

(Newsroom Iefimerida.gr, 2020a).

On July 7, 2020, groups of leftists gathered and protested the bill for the demonstrations. Federations and unions ‘call on the workers to fight to abolish it in practice, through dynamic and strike mobilisations and actions, on the streets of the struggle’ (Iefimerida.gr, 2020b). On the same day—the day that the jardinières were written with these slogans—the MP Pavlos Polakis (2020), a member of the left-wing opposition party *SYRIZA*, ironically addressed the Athens mayor via his personal Facebook account, stating:

‘Kosta Bakoyanni (the mayor), fortunately, they [namely ‘the jardinières’] were [painted] with anti-graffiti [paint]. And you paid €500 for each, while they would just cost €50.’

Some days before (June 28, 2020), Kostas Bakoyannis tried to give explanations for prior complaints of Pavlos Polakis about the high cost of the jardinières of the ‘Grand Promenade’:

‘A small detail, perhaps disappointing, is that we are talking about complex metal structures that weigh up to a ton, so as not to become ammunition. Small detail: they are designed not to be vandalized but they are also covered with anti-graffiti material. A small detail for Mr Polakis is that the jardinières have a guarantee from the manufacturer for up to 15 years.’

(Newsroom’π’, 2020).

That was the mayor’s response about the cost of urban interventions with the ‘golden jardinières’ (the FAQ team, 2020).

7.7 The Grand Promenade: They cleaned the anti-graffiti jardinières

On July 8, 2020, the mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyannis (2020f), posted a video on his Instagram profile displaying the jardinières' cleaning (fig.154). The mayor wrote:

‘After the desecration of the monument to the dead of Marfin, the next ‘revolutionary’ act was the vandalism of the urban equipment of the Grand Promenade. Those who try to destroy and tear down are doing so in vain. We will continue to build and dream of a better Athens. P.S. The jardinières are cleaned.’

Indeed, the slogan that was chosen to be displayed in his video (while it was being cleaned) was ‘UPRISING’ (fig. 154). Although this might have been an unintentional decision, the exposure of the authority’s power to whitewash the ‘uprising’ has a symbolic character.





Figure 154 Unknown, Cleaning the ‘UPRISING’, 2020. Screenshots of stills from a video. Kostas Bakoyannis’s Instagram profile. ©Kostas Bakoyannis.

As it is displayed in the following images (fig. 155-157), the jardinières were finally whitewashed. On the left of the first image below (fig. 155), the depicted jardinière hosted the slogan ‘Justice will be decided on the street’ (fig. 156-157) just some hours before.

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Figure 155 Lifo.gr, The jardinières were finally whitewashed, 2020. Photography. ©Lifo.gr. 2020.



Figure 156 Lifo.gr, The jardinières were finally whitewashed, 2020. Photography. ©Lifo.gr. 2020.

The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian Trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies



Figure 157 Lifo.gr, The jardinières were finally whitewashed, 2020. Photography. ©Lifo.gr. 2020

Conclusion

1. Summary of research

The central objective of this research has been to furnish a practical and theoretical mapping of the emergent tangible and intangible heritage of the Athens cityscape, based on its examination and documentation during Greece's economic crisis. This has been achieved by preserving the ephemeral traces that have marked the Athenian surfaces with a memory trace. The trace of the crisis mirrored how the city produces, narrates, and revitalises its cultural history inscribed in its skin. The extent to which this aim has been achieved will be considered below as regards the principal objectives that emerged throughout the deployment of the project. In general terms, the doctoral thesis was divided into two parts: a theoretical approach and discussion on bibliography took place mostly in the 'Introduction' and Chapters 1, 2, and 3, whereas the practice component was extended in the rest of it: Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, and the two Appendixes (1, 2). However, both components, theoretical discussion, and practice, intersected throughout the whole research project. The project achieved:

(i) To establish a precise critical and theoretical mapping of the ephemeral traces, addressing the social and economic trauma of the crisis in the urban fabric:

To stress and discuss the 'new reality' of the visual appropriation of the Athenian surfaces, I focused on the extension of the phenomenon in time and space, namely throughout all the recent years of the crisis (2008-now). In short, aiming at assessing this condition in terms of the deployment of a 'contagious' dominant form, through this doctoral study I attempted to promote a new methodology and theory concerning the layering on top of the city's surfaces. The adoption of the term 'skin' (derma) was the principal vehicle and functioned as a socio-political and socio-cultural change indicator (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

ii) To address a gap in the literature by adopting a 'skin' (derma) analogy as a response to scholars' attempts to describe the omnipresent and resistant visual appropriation of Athens at a partial level:

More specifically, a gap can be detected in existing literature related to widely used terms and interpretations for describing the layering of public interventions such as 'graffiti' and 'street art' (Introduction: 'Forays into theory', Chapters 1, 2). By moving beyond these terms, I was able to embrace the unintentional interventions that change the city's landscape,

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carrying implicit socio-economic, political, and cultural connotations. Current literature provides us with a sense of this imagery mostly through photographs. Yet, the overmarking activity and the visual appropriation of Athens during the crisis obtained inconceivable dimensions in time and space. Hence, the necessity of speaking of a unique skin (derma) covering the surfaces of the city set out to include more ways of appropriation that, if described with a photograph only, lose most of their meaning and role (Chapters 1, 2, and 3). The aforementioned gap includes a lack of sufficient research to detect, observe, and attempt to understand the mass of layers, a ‘skin’ beyond its components, that was created and describes the city in crisis. My research aimed to go beyond widely used terms and interpretations for describing the public interventions mentioned above carrying explicit messages of, for example, socio-political unrest (such as ‘graffiti’ and ‘street art’). For this purpose, I sought and gave prominence to the anonymous trace, beyond artistry, and targeted meaningful interventions. The visual interpretation of the ever-changing derma of the city was used as a point of reference for historical change, as socioeconomic developments bring forth evidence of exactly that. In my research, this ubiquitous skin acted as the field and vehicle for an alternative understanding and recording of the crisis through its visual imagery (Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

(iii) To establish a discussion at a theoretical level through a bibliography and contribute to the engaged disciplines in turn:

At a theoretical level, the project relied on an interdisciplinary investigation, including fields such as sociology, social anthropology, archaeology, cultural politics, architecture, language, urban studies, art history, etc. The foray into theory concerning these fields was necessary to prove that this skin was distinctive and acted as a socio-political agent and sociocultural medium. It addressed a plethora of voices of struggle, marginality, and counterculture that would not have been heard in a different case. By studying this derma, the objective also appeared to be the understanding of how people explicitly and implicitly resist and appropriate their city’s surface as a response to the socio-political conditions (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3), even via subverting the authorities’ decision to clean the surface of the city (Chapter 1: 1.5; Chapter 2: 2.3, 2.4, and 2.6; and especially Chapter 7). By pointing to the idea of the contested space, the aim was to contribute to these disciplines, in turn, both in theory and practice, through the adoption of concepts and notions such as the trace, the imprint, the layering, the print, the palimpsest (especially Chapter 2; Chapter 3) collage and de-collage (Chapter 6), etc., approached through experimental creative practices, by embodying theory in a new body of visual outcomes. This

methodology has the potential to be utilised, in turn, by the above-mentioned disciplines as a visual assemblage and to comprise alternative bibliographic resources as an addition to the theoretical discourses on the issue of Athens in crisis so far.

(iv) To establish a methodology for preserving the skin and move towards further practice through fine art approaches, contributing to the scholarly research:

A distinctive methodology was developed using photography and recently developed technologies: 3D scanning and photogrammetry (Chapter 4). The aim was to promote photography's potential and its extension to scanning (3D effects) to capture the layers of trace-memory and preserve them. One major subject area was the vertical, two-dimensional surfaces. To be precise: a series of public walls as well as a great body of façades of derelict closed stores demonstrate the extension of the impact of the crisis on commerce: Chapter 4: 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.2.6, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.8.1, and 4.8.2; Chapter 5: 5.5, and 5.6; Chapter 6: 6.3, and 6.7; Chapter 7: 7.2). Another subject area was the surfaces of the appropriated urban 'objects', such as metal boxes (Chapter 4: 4.2.5, and 4.2.6.; Chapter 6: 6.7), post boxes (Chapter 5: 5.5; Chapter 6: 6.7), and billboards (Chapter 6: 6.5). Along with the development of this methodology, the periodical fieldwork and recording intended to utilise the layering process of the skin's development by also adopting it in other, various practice-based experimentations: printmaking, collage, installation, objects, etc. (Appendix 1 and 2). These experimentations in printmaking, through layering and collaging approaches, can be seen in juxtaposition with the discussion about palimpsest (Chapter 1: 1.1., 1.2, and 1.3; Chapter 2: 2.3, and 2.5; Chapter 3: 3.1; Chapter 4: 4.1.3; Chapter 7, introductory text), as well as collage and décollage (Chapter 1: 1.2, and 1.3; Chapter 2: 2.2; Chapter 3: 3.3; Chapter 4: 4.5,) Chapter 6, Chapter 7: 7.6). It also addresses a new interpretation of the ruins of the crisis through virtual fragments, suggested by the glitches produced by 3D technology and photogrammetry. Thus, it intended to add an additional layer of fragmented ruins to a landscape, the Athenian, that has been formulated for centuries as a palimpsest of historical ruins witnessing the city's development through the centuries. This original line of work assisted in re-imagining the produced 3D models as stand-alone fragments, objects, and evidence of ruins (Chapters 4, 5, and 6).

(v) To develop a body of practice and forward the emergent discussion; both operated as vehicles for addressing queries of identity, continuity, and archaeological and ethnographic evidence:

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As these fragments are brought to the spotlight, they can be seen as remnants of the contemporary era, ruins linked to ancient ones (offcuts of ruins) that co-exist in the same field of study, namely the evolution of the ancient city that is currently Athens. The history and significance of the antiquity fragments have played a major role in the formation of Greek identity (Hamilakis, 2007, p. 119). In this way, the current fragments appear to fall into place and add more layers to the development of history and a people's identity. This innovative positioning, through the discussion of the existing bibliography and the practice, can contribute to and provide valuable insight into disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, and ethnography by preserving the current trace for future research purposes (Chapter 1: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5; Chapter 2: 2.1, and 2.4; Chapter 3: 3.1; Chapter 4: 4.1, 4.1.3, and 4.8; Chapter 5: 5.1, and 5.2; Chapter 6: 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, and 6.6; Chapter 7). The matter of trace-memory of the crisis and identity may be juxtaposed with the issues raised in Chapter 7 concerning 'the clean city' and the official authorities' (the mayor of Athens) right to vanish the crisis' traces. Here I provided evidence of how the relations of power and resistance are relentlessly apparent and dynamic in the Athenian cityscape. The contested space is resistant to such an extent that any cleaning strategy has proved to be unsuccessful so far.

(vi) To establish virtual 'de-maps' and counter-maps, providing novel wanderings within the ruins and the landscape of crisis, to account for Google Maps as a research tool:

Moreover, the use of tools such as Google Maps for research assisted in the formation of new maps that embodied and depicted the iconography of the crisis. One could argue that this de-maps the city and the normal view of sightseeing and thus negates the normative tourist gaze (Chapter 5: 5.1, 5.2). The decision to hijack this GIS application to promote the unseen and neglected traces and ruins also attempted a critical look at Google's hegemony to have the right to map our cities (Chapter 5: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6). Google Maps, as a research tool, was also used as a 'time travel' device, as it photographically saved previous states of a certain place. This potential assisted my research by providing access to pictures of a place from, for instance, ten years ago (Chapter 6). The use of such tools in this direction acted as an archaeological 'excavation' of former actualities, uncovering layers upon layers of pictures taken in a metaphorical 'decollaging' (peeling off) process (Chapter 6). An indicative case of this map as well as the possibility of a virtual tool are provided in Appendix 1.

2. Contribution to knowledge

This PhD project has been undertaken in between two eras of crises: Greece's economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the project at the doctoral level started in 2018, it relied on a long-lasting experience of the urban reality of Athens, counting almost four decades. From the early stages of the introduction, it is understood that an empirical approach occurring for years and addressing wandering, observation, and recording was the driving force for both practice before the PhD, and practical and theoretical investigations during the doctoral research. Having completed this project, a suggested aim that emerged as overall was the role of the walker to link a range of successive layers of the Athenian unfolding (palimpsest) over time, through a conscious preservation of the traces of a fleeting landscape. The chief objective to be accomplished was to provide such evidence so that the layer of the crisis establishes its position within the wider frame of what history is. Moving in this direction, the empirical approach set out to link the crisis period (and the outset of the 'meta-crisis' Covid-19 period that succeeds it) to the pre-crisis period and the Olympic Games 'Athens 2004'. This attempt was examined within a wider frame of Greece's history (modern and contemporary), addressing issues of identity and continuity. These issues and the intersection of all these temporal layers were raised through a common denominator: the significance of traces, marks, and ruins situated in the Athenian cityscape. This was the role of the walker, *flâneur*, which shifted from the pure child walking to the impulsive protestor-*flâneur*, then the lonely nocturnal walker-writer and the artist that is inspired and influenced by the urban reality of the crisis in his practice (Introduction). Finally, the conscious walker, who decided to preserve the traces of the crisis at a doctoral level, undertook to furnish a stepping stone towards a greater discourse on the crisis' visualised actuality. This was achieved through practice-based approaches and direct dialogue with existing bibliographies, contributing in turn to a methodology of recording and preservation, practice outcomes, and further discussion and insight into the theory.

The major contribution of this project is how the acknowledgement of the skin's existence as well as the adoption of that term (in Greek: *derma*) allowed for a mapping of the crisis through traces left on the city's surfaces, taken as indicators of a tangible and intangible urban heritage. By bringing to light how the city produced its trace-memory and the importance of its preservation, it functioned as a network of how the city writes, reads, and sheds its cultural memory, namely a memory skin. The mapping of this skin, as a material-spatial entity and simultaneously the surface of the city, was utilised for charting the alterations or, generally, the 'visual evolution' of Athens, shifting from a period of glory, the

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2004 Olympic Games, to the economic crisis. Hereby, the central contribution is in bringing value to how a city is socially, politically, and culturally reclaimed through struggle, expressed via its external surfaces as a means of critical public discourse. In turn, the public space mirrors the counter-hegemonic written traces left by its agonistic public. From a social anthropology perspective, the Athenian landscape of crisis responds to the nature of the cityscape to be in a relentless construction, shaped and reshaped as a result of the experiences and the activities of the subjects that get in contact with it (Karathanasis, 2010, p. 316). My research's engagement was in total accordance with the phenomenological approach to landscapes and places stated by the anthropologist and archaeologist Christopher Tilley (1994), who argues that the spaces within a city exist as 'social productions' and 'are always centred in relation to human agency' (p. 10).

The decision for a skin approach, as a medium and intermediary between the body of the city itself (spatiality) and an always updated historic layer-surface, may be summarised in Tilley's following statement. According to Christopher Tilley (1994) and his alternative view, social space is seen as:

'...as a medium rather than a container for action, something that is involved in action and cannot be divorced from it. As such, space does not and cannot exist apart from the events and activities within which it is implicated. Space is socially produced, and different societies, groups and individuals act out their lives in different spaces' (p. 10).

That is to say, by undertaking this project, I addressed how the experience of the crisis triggered the appropriation of the cityscape (praxis). In turn, the outcome has been the skin imagery, the face of the crisis itself. This is my research's positionality and the reason I developed my own contribution, sparked by practice and discussion with relevant sources from various socio-politically engaged disciplines.

The research can be understood as having contributed to the practical and theoretical knowledge of its field of enquiry in five distinct ways.

- (i) To propose a skin methodology, rhetoric, and body of visual outcomes that can contribute to emergent gaps within seemingly saturated theoretical research in the field (Introduction: 'Forays into theory', and especially in Chapters 1, 2, and 3), through novel interpretations of the public space or re-imagining former ideas of the crisis (through practice: Chapter 4, 5, 6,

and 7, Appendix 1-2). By mapping and reconceptualising the city's surfaces as living skin (the derma of crisis) in such a way as to achieve an innovative as well as richly detailed alternative to critical theory interpretation and re-reading of crisis. Besides, the research is marked by interdisciplinary influences and methods, drawing on social anthropology, sociology, urbanism, architectural theory, art history, cultural politics, and so on (Introduction: 'Forays into theory'; especially in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, and throughout the rest of the thesis). To achieve its contributions, it balanced theory and history with creative practice (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 and the two Appendices). The visual phenomena of the cityscape were engaged through a discussion and practice experimentation of layering (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7), palimpsest (Chapters 1, 2, and 3), collage (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7), and décollage (Chapter 6) were finally illustrated and theorised. Indeed, the main research objective was mirrored as a skin (derma) of Athens built up through layering, tearing, drawing, and writing, addressed in my practice through photography and photogrammetry (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, Appendix 1), collaging, etching, and screen printing (Appendix 2). My artistic practice, which predates the embarkment on PhD research (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) as well as that completed within the first two years and a half, until early in 2020 (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, Appendix 1, and 2), established visual forms of documentation of the crisis via photography, photogrammetry, and 3D modelling (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, Appendix 1). This early and direct engagement with the crisis, starting around 2008, made the central claims of the thesis stand up to scrutiny. The detection and meticulous recording of the overwriting, layering, and slow process of 'ruination' substantiated the crisis, and the visual documents attested to how certain publics were living through the crisis as well as challenging the failures of the state. Along these lines, the contribution of this research was to set out to explore 'innovative paths to charting the visual evolution of Athens over the economic crisis; to find alternative ways to re-read the crisis through the traces and writings that compose the 'skin' of the city over its urban surfaces.' (Chapter 5: 'De-Mapping the Map of Athens in Crisis').

An essential gap in literature that I managed to fill dealt with the association between the public's struggle, through the cityscape's appropriation, and the vocabulary and terminology in use in the bibliographic sources. In particular, the usually adopted terms 'graffiti' and 'street art' (even in adaptations such as 'overwriting the city', Kim and Flores, 2018, p. 9; 'overpainted' Karathanasis, 2014, p. 177) have proven to be a scope limitation arising from the inability to provide sufficient appropriate evidence of the generalised and omnipresent skinned reality (Introduction: 'Forays into theory', and especially in Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

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In favour of the detection of the gap, firstly, it was the long-standing wandering and the immesiveness in the landscape's actualities that assisted me in understanding the nature of the specific [Athenian] cityscape in comparison to existing bibliographic interpretations. Secondly, the long-lasting engagements in layering and palimpsest experimentations—in printmaking, collages, installations [murals, or spatial ones] (Introduction: 'How the city and its urban metamorphosis influenced my practice before heading towards PhD research')—influenced by the formerly referred experience, furnished me with a theoretical perception of these fine art fields and the history of art through the practice, the materiality, and the direct contact with the materials. From a sociological perspective of culture, the existing literature stresses unavoidably that the crisis, as a condition of living and experiencing, signified 'a vicious circle of austerity, deep recession, uncertainty, and precariousness, but simultaneously opened a window to the imaginative expression' (Zaimakis, 2015b, p. 392) on any available urban surface. From a socio-anthropological perspective, it is highlighted that during the years of Greece's economic crisis, this way of expression acquired unprecedented dimensions (Karathanasis, 2014, p. 178). That is to say, the Athenian urban space in crisis has not only been a space for expression but also the common ground of sharing the need for expression; 'the appropriate choice of street objects has been part of the writers' spatial strategy to convey meaningful messages and to provoke the interest of passers-by' (Zaimakis, 2016, p. 70). Social space and the need for expression intersected and obtained a new corporeal entity, standing alone as a new spatiality and, concurrently, hijacking the available space (surfaces). This is the idea of the skin that is innovatively introduced and contributes to the field of enquiry. Hence, addressing the skin in detail transcends and goes beyond its mere features and components, such as 'graffiti', 'street art', or 'slogans'.

Thus, this PhD project set out to address a lack of literature concerning generalised terms such as 'graffiti', 'street art', 'public writing', etc. On the contrary, by adopting the term 'skin' (derma) this gap in the literature was re-examined and re-interpreted. This was achieved both by engaging in theoretical discourse and via various practice-based methodologies that made room for reconceptualisation and theorising of the issue through them. Certainly, the bibliography written on graffiti and street art, both for the case of Athens and in general, offered valuable insight into the diversity of the fields interested in the urban landscape as a social space. For this purpose, an essential part of the thesis relied on a discussion of the above-mentioned terms and their conceptual contribution (Introduction: 'Forays into theory'; Chapters 1, 2, and 3). Besides, graffiti interpretation and analysis,

according to Graves-Brown and Schofield (2011), can unveil ‘feelings and relationships, personal and political’, witness its social and spatial context, and show us ‘a layering of time and of changing relationships over time’ (p. 1399).

Pangalos (2014) states that there is ‘an unforeseen concentration of writings (the whole spectrum of graffiti practices and versions) on the city’s vertical surfaces, rendering it one of the most stained and saturated cities in the world’ (p. 154). Although his reference makes use of ‘graffiti’ out of necessity to describe the phenomenon, my research went beyond this limited term that may imply artistry, specific media, techniques, and conventional understanding. In Chapter 2, and specifically in 2.4, ‘The city is the message, the skin is the message’, I referred to Lewisohn’s (2008) perspective on the articulation of functional graffiti as the one that is under certain rules; these rules cannot be broken; style is also essential (p. 107). These broad terms may cover only a portion of the bigger picture. However, urban appropriation has been so widely noticeable in terms of time (extension), space (any available surface), and materiality (techniques and materials used) that a novel, ‘fresh’ approach was required. The skin approach as a contribution focused on non-artistic forms, showing how it makes place for all visual traces, including those that would never be considered ‘graffiti’ or ‘urban art’ and thus be captured on camera, documented, or used in literature. As Alison Young states (2005) with regards to graffiti, ‘a commonly held view splits public graffiti into “art” on the one hand and “vandalism” on the other’ (p. 51). On the contrary, in my research, I equally encompassed and handled any trace of witnessing the anonymous need to be expressed apart from ‘art’ or ‘vandalism’. This embracement of the anonymity in a skin analogy, where every produced image contributes to it, can be summarised in Lowenthal’s (1961, p. 260) viewpoint on urban imagery that ‘every image and idea about the world is compounded of personal experience, learning, imagination, and memory.’ Our perceptions of nature and people are influenced by the locations we live in, the places we visit and travel to, the worlds we read about and see in art, and the imaginary and fantastical worlds (Lowenthal, 1961, p. 260). The use of skin as a space of ‘social production’ identifies the act that ‘takes place as part of the day-to-day praxis or practical activity of individuals and groups’ (Tilley, 1994, p. 10). This derma can testify to ideas such as those pointed out below by Tilley (1994):

‘A centred and meaningful space involves specific sets of linkages between the physical space of the non-humanly created world, somatic states of the body, the mental space of cognition and representation and the space of movement,

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encounter and interaction between persons and between persons and the human and non-human environment' (p. 10).

The contribution of a polyphonic skin, equally engaging and respecting every voice as material components, may be in dialogue with rather recent scholarly initiatives. In Chapters 3 and 4, I founded my argumentation and contribution on perspectives with respect to the preservation of ephemeral traces (graffiti), undertaken by HES, Historic Environment Scotland (2017), and Historic England (2016). This is how, for instance, Historic Environment Scotland (2017) acknowledges the value of graffiti and examines it as an essential feature of Scotland's historic development through the landscape (p. 4); thus, it must be recorded and preserved.

(ii) My second contribution deals with how the practice engaged with and responded to historic and ethnographic issues of the current era. This engagement finally comprised a whole methodology, including wandering/observation, photography as the means for recording, 3D scanning/modelling, and photogrammetries. At a later stage, the necessity of archiving, showing, and distributing the produced imageries prompted me to appropriate Google Maps and make my visual outcomes 'inhabit' the ordinary map in the place where their referential realities were located in Athens, namely in their physical space. Hence, this direction was handled by having as a stimulus practice and empirical experience, in dialogue with the existing scholarly research, finally producing a new discourse as a contribution to it. A condensed discussion on the bibliography is addressed in Chapter 3, which functioned as the prolegomenon of how the practice may infuse the current historic and ethnographic investigation with a new insight addressed in Chapter 4 and all the chapters from then on. It was significant for my research that Historic England (2016) and Historic Environment Scotland (2017) stressed the urgency of recording urban ephemerality, considering that missing the chance to capture a current trace could affect its future potential, particularly if it is no longer available (Historic England, 2016, p. 2, 4, pp. 7-8). According to them, whether we refer to pre-historic murals ['graffiti'] or the current 'contentious' traces, all may prove a valuable insight into the 'understanding of heritage significance and authenticity' inscribed in the landscape (Historic Environment Scotland, 2017, p. 4). These arguments can unavoidably account for the skin's potential as the vehicle for retaining evidence of collective memory: the traces in a landscape concretise and make memory on their own (Mitchell, 2003, p. 790). This concept was argued for and discussed in detail in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, relying on Historic England's (2016) enquiries I discussed how the current graffiti should be placed in a wider range and context of historic graffiti, given that its prior

forms [e.g., ancient traces] have also served as historic evidence when they were examined in the future (p. 1). My practice also enabled me to respond and contribute to Historic England's investigation in their attempt to provide 'guidance for the systematic recording' and 'practical advice on recording' (p. 1). According to them, the recording of the current graffiti has ethnographic potential for future purposes given that it allows us an insight into 'people's habits, occupations, and literacy as well as historical events' (p. 1). Equally, in my project, the case of Athens during the long-lasting crisis was handled as a historic event in the course of Greece's contemporary history.

(iii) The third contribution addresses the media of practice exploration, such as photography, 3D scanning/modelling and photogrammetry, at the service of documentation and further practice experimentation. This shift from the mere photograph to multiples, and from them towards building up whole sceneries and objects (virtual or printed), and the potential of the software in use (Photoscan Pro, Agisoft Metashape) may offer new insights into research engaged in new technologies in creative fields: fine artists, photographers, architects, etc. Furthermore, my attempt to document and read the traces of Greece's crisis, as vehicles for historical evidence, set out to contribute multiple potentials. On the one hand, it inspired creative practices via further experimentation in image-making and practice. On the other hand, the body of my whole study assisted in a prospective ethnographic examination of the period through practice methodologies offered through the lenses of a fine artist. To connect my former contribution with the current section, I will start with the conceptual potential and gradually touch on the significance of the utilised media concerning my project. In this way, media will be discussed both in practice and in their conceptual dynamic.

The contribution of my methodology of recording can be seen in juxtaposition with Historic England's (2016) statement that graffiti typically takes up a small part of larger historic structures or buildings (p. 6); as such, it is a component of a larger whole. Studying an immensely appropriated cityscape as the Athenian, the only direction was to go beyond these easily perceived (or called) forms as 'graffiti' and 'street art'. As I have highlighted at length, graffiti is subject to artistry, rules, and style. Instead, my wandering and gradual practice, influenced by the city throughout the years, prompted me to set off in quest of different angles of the city's imagery: extension in space, seemingly indifferent urban forms and volumes, and anonymous interventions. In other words, activities that do not necessarily require skills. However, they witness the evolution of the 'face' of the city due to the crisis. For this purpose, since the beginning of Chapter 4 (4.1.1), which focused on 'Photography, 3D scanning, and Photogrammetry...', I started with images of urban scenes that emphasise

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the persistence of the symbol of Alexis Grigoropoulos' murder by a policeman, 6 years and even 11 years after his death. In 4.1.2, I introduced the initiation of the recording in my practice (2008) and the first traces of the forthcoming crisis. Although these documents mostly refer to slogans, it is of pivotal importance to notice that even then, a tendency to occupy the space verbally extends onto multiple available surfaces, not only the walls. In 4.1.3, I present a decisive shift in my practice: from the slogans in the city centre, I shifted to wider areas while the crisis was gradually getting deeper over time (2011–12). Indeed, as the crisis deepened over the years, a process of desertification became more and more noticeable in the urban landscape. As a result of this detection, I recorded layers of posters merged with writings and marks into a new unity (skin) that spread to a great extent. The recession produced newly available spaces, such as the facades of the massively closed stores depicted in the same section. In other parts of the thesis, numerous new 'sites' were claimed; their visual appropriations were depicted taking place throughout the following years (ending up in 2019). In 4.2.5, the transformation of urban metal boxes is examined, as well as, in the same section, the façade of a closed store, to show how all the surrounding spaces were included (e.g., the entrance of a building) as potential spaces for appropriation. In the same way, in 4.3.2, in the case study 'Viva la Revolucion', any available surface is depicted as visually saturated with a wide range of visual interventions (in other words, like a randomly made urban collage). Sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 encompass the material of the two extensive fieldworks, dated in December 2019, denoting an almost total covering of the hijacked surfaces. In Chapter 5, 'De-mapping the Map of Athens in Crisis, 5.5, we notice the realised urban activity on two post boxes and on a wall that witnesses a multivalent activity on its surface. In Chapter 6, 'Décollage and Collage: The Organic Derma', in 6.3., 'Case Study: "B & K" Closed Store', we see the unfolding of a wider panorama of transformation on the façade of a closed store. Relying on my photographic material and Google Maps to retrieve former layers of reality, temporal layers of appropriation throughout the years stress the condition of the site during the crisis. In 6.5.1, we are witnesses to a billboard's transformation from 2009 to 2019 via 3D models and layers retrieved from Google Maps. The vibrant colours of seductive advertisements of luxury gradually faded away, subject to weathering and abandonment, and the site was left in total ruin. In 6.7, photogrammetric approaches relying on 3D scanning emphasise more spatial recordings, where walls, urban volumes (post boxes, metal boxes), corners, and pillars are discussed as urban collages, accounting for the skin's omnipresence.

The use of media themselves increased the potential contributions and responses to enquiries from the engaged disciplines in the urban landscape. In the first two above-mentioned sections, 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, I still relied on a simple digital camera and mere depictions of the referent subjects. Even in 4.1.3, where I moved towards a new thematical and conceptual area in comparison with other research (examining slogans, graffiti, etc.), my only apparatus is the same camera. Yet, a decisive moment was when I decided to bring 3D scanning potential into my practice. The long-standing wanderings increased the photographic material that became more detailed, successive, and overlapping, prompting me to take 3D approaches. Thus, I built up more extensive urban scenes, that laid bare the skin as well as its immensity and omnipresence. Additional proof of details, tangibility, and the ‘microcosm’ of the organic development of the skin was provided by the multiple layers of images for a 3D-scanned model, aspects that single images in academic papers were unable to demonstrate so far. Even in cases such as ‘Urban Layers’ (2.3, ‘Derma: The Skin of the City’), where the photographic images are assembled on a map, the charted sites identified graffiti and street art and their makers, namely artists. Although a map has the potential to denote the expansion of the phenomenon, the embedded images still focus on easily perceived subject matters, either graffiti or street art. My discussion, however, on this map addressed how the additional visual marks that surrounded the focal point (e.g., graffiti) were also present; no frame can delineate a starting point or an end of this imagery. Innovative adoptions of new technologies and 3D scanning were achieved to point to the case of the skin and thus provide a new insight into academic bibliography as well as new emergent tools based on fine art practices at the service of their research.

One may easily understand that being in quest of handling the phenomenon of the skin prompted me to seek out and make use of a wide range of possibilities in the photographic image. Apart from the outcomes, it is essential to stress a contribution to the emergent potential of the software in use, especially the stages of building up a 3D model, in favour of further practice. Given that several disciplines (fine art, architecture, archaeology, etc.) engage in 3D modelling practices, I set out to contribute this diversity of usages to practice reflections, experimentation, and new insights into their fields. In Chapter 4, and precisely in 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, I addressed how the software was used in the gradual production of a virtual skin; I also referred to its ‘stand-alone’ nature (Agisoft.com, 2019) and how it acted as a ‘partner’ in the quest of constructing virtual skins. However, an extra dimension of its potential is how its exported files, in .tiff (fig. 159-160), and .jpeg format (fig. 158), may bring to light and produce a whole new imagery, namely drawings, prints and collages, in

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digital and hard-copy formats, from the process of the model's making. As I have engaged with and undertaken research on mapping this skin and finally placed fragments of its realities in maps as well, I will discuss below this potential as a contribution to image making.



Figure 158 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Mural Posters*: the jpeg exported image, December 2018, 2018. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

The .jpeg exported files (fig. 158) represent a mapping of the texture of the 3D model. In other words, the surface material (virtual) with which the model is dressed. The fragments that comprise the model appear unified, although still in a new combination: some elements are becoming a vague cloud, and the forms seem to be melted in a new syntax as if the

generator (software) of their new composition follows his own grammar structure for recomposing the synthesis. The software's 'collaged' potential transforms the representational image of the city (the scanned referent) into an illusion. What the viewer experiences while encountering a digital or printed version of this imagery is rather illusory, providing an experience closer to Cubism that rejects any of the rules of perspective attached to the initially scanned (real) subject matter. This dimension seems to interrogate the reason and purpose of 3D scanning as well: is it made to serve us, constrained to accurate representations? What happens when the software is left alone to be creative? Without a doubt, the software has immense potential, and approaches such as these, as contributions, respond to people's requests to handle programmes as creative media.

The .tiff exported file (fig. 159-160) is the software's option 'UV Mapping' as an outcome and displays fragmentation of the virtual object. It represents the way that the software proceeds to chart the model as a fragmented map comprised of numerous pieces. This is how the software 'read', 'interpreted', and produced the pieces that made up a specific referent. Let us remember what I mentioned in Chapter 4 (4.2.3) about a 'partner' and that 'we were working together as a duo... I accepted and adapted its results without any intervention during the digital process or transferring its exported files into another programme...'. This fragmented potential makes an excellent contribution to creative processes. The software acts as an intelligent collage maker. It provides us with a spatiotemporal collage, a recomposition of reality on its own free will. It combines materials from physical points that are not close to each other, creating a new reality of co-existing aspects. The new reality, by embodying fragments (visual activities) from different times, flattens the time on a common new surface, either a digital or a printed one. This image-making strategy has great potential: if we provide the software with a new body of images to align or images from different periods of the same referent, the composition will always be different. A new 'ready-made' collage.

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Figure 159 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Mural Posters*: the .tiff exported image, December 2018, 2018. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

New shapes, new colours and new compositional balances emerge, namely diverse possibilities for collaged syntheses. Let us see how the UV mapping fragmented image is different in April 2019 (fig. 160) in juxtaposition with the image in December 2018 (fig. 159). In a hard-copy format, these images produce prints that can be exhibited, as shown in the next figures (fig. 161-162).



Figure 160 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Mural Posters*: the .tiff exported image, April 2019, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Figure 161 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Urban Fragments*, 2019. Photogrammetries printed on paper.
150 cm x 150 cm. The Winchester Gallery. © Dave Gibbons.

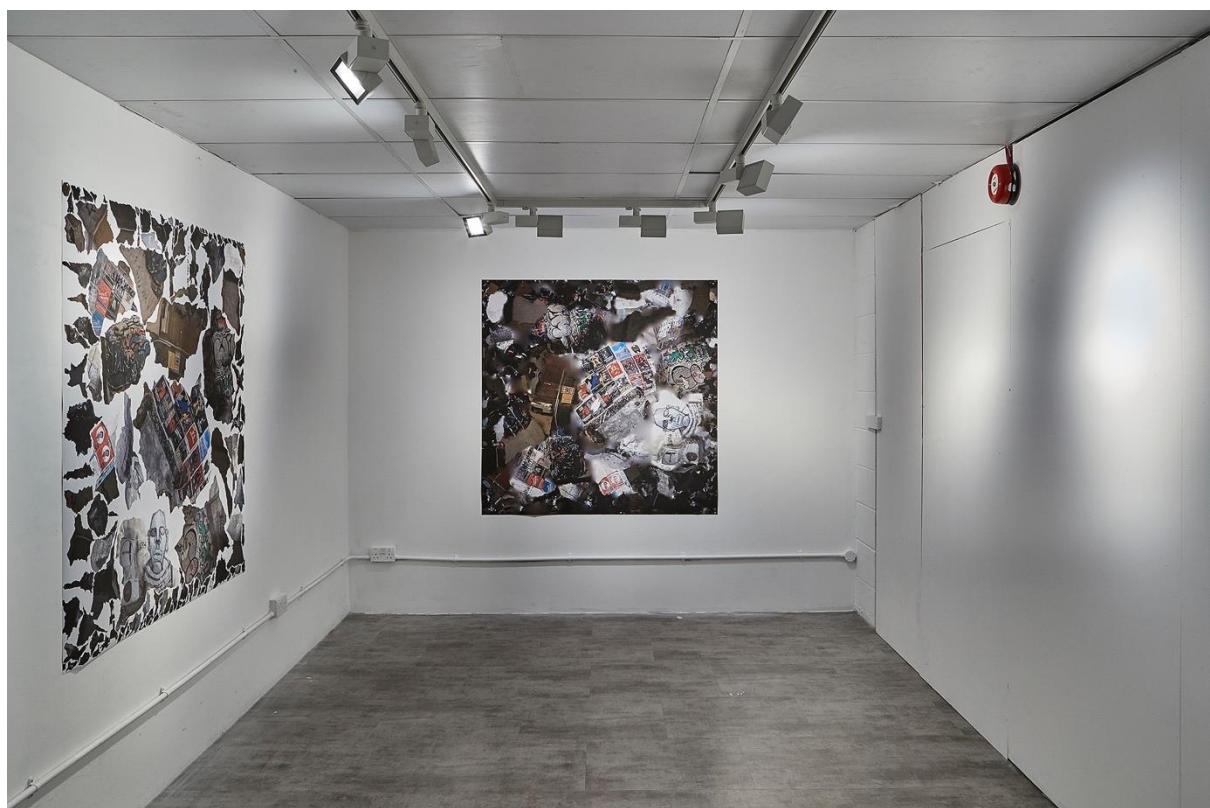


Figure 162 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Urban Fragments*, 2019. Photogrammetries printed on paper.
150 cm x 150 cm. The Winchester Gallery. © Dave Gibbons.

One more potential is relevant to how these outcomes may be reformulated in new collage compositions of one's own free will. To make a collage with the constituent elements, we proceed to a virtual décollaged activity. A 'tearing apart' process (décollage) in a virtual space can be achieved in Photoshop's environment with just a selection choice (quick selection tool), Cmd+X (cut), Cmd+V (paste) on a new document (blank page). The virtual collage is therefore a digital activity that consists of a select+cut+paste sequence (fig. 163). If a physical collage is made by a cut-and-paste process using raw material, glue, and a new surface, the digital one is the outcome of a range of orders. The emergent compositions may remain in the realm of virtual space as digital images and be shown or distributed as such, or they may cross into a material condition as prints and be exhibited.



Figure 163 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Urban Fragments redirected in new virtual collaged compositions, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Another essential perspective and contribution to practice and theory are how the components of the UV mapping may exist as individual objects, addressing ruins or ‘artefacts’ unearthed during a virtual excavation (fig. 164).

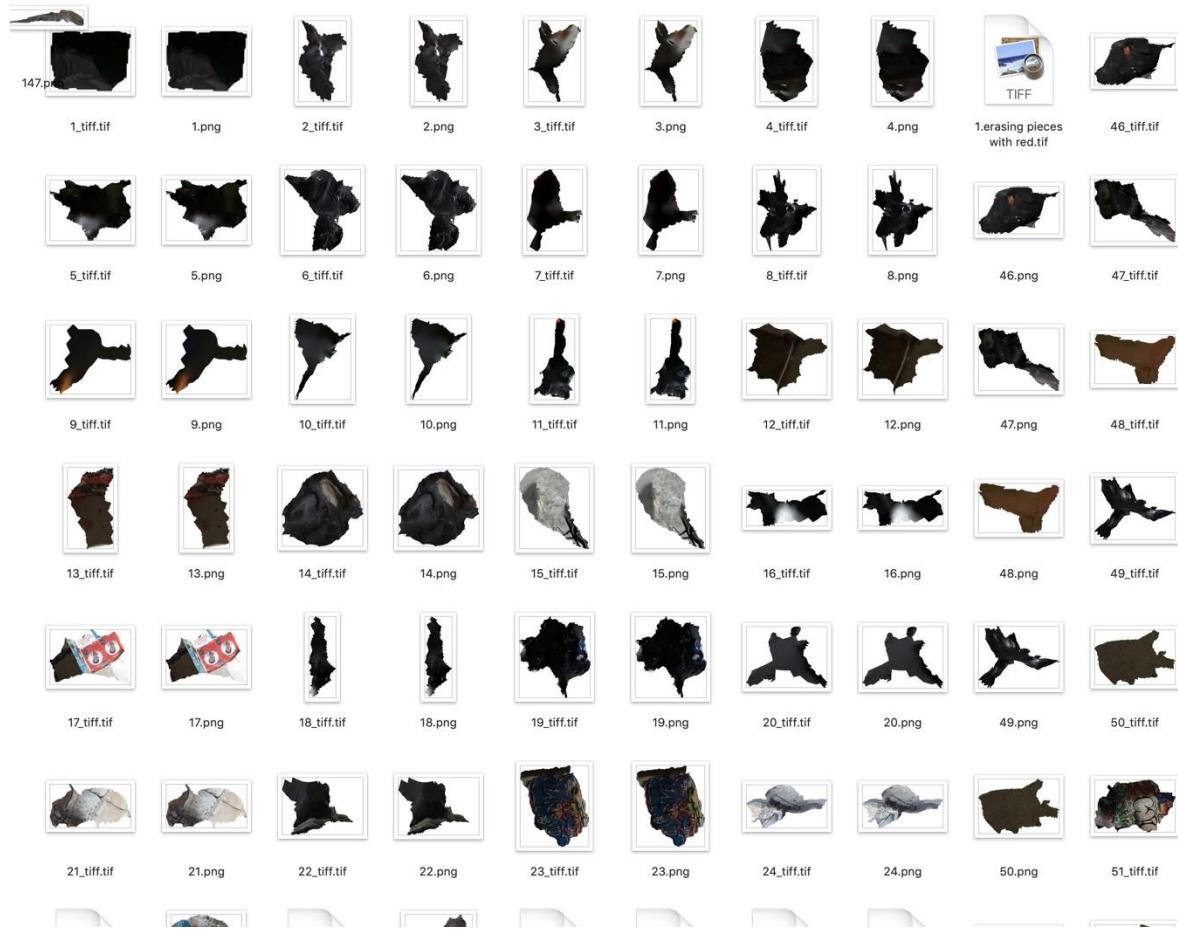


Figure 164 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Mural Posters*: isolated fragments from the exported .tiff file. 2020. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

By tracking all these elements separately, I produced a visual data bank of each one of them as an individual file. Thus, the already fragmented image of the map was developed further in a fragmentary way, and each element could function both as an individual virtual object and as an ingredient for new collaged compositions. Relying on the uniqueness of these objects, I went one step further and incorporated (uploaded) some of them on the maps I produced by appropriating Google Maps. Hence, once I made a pin on the virtual map corresponding to a real spot in Athens, I also attached some of the ruins that had emerged from this very spot and its real skin. Although I will refer further to the conception of these maps below, I will now proceed to account for my reference to the ruins and excavation, suggesting their potential link to archaeology and ethnography. From a sociological perspective, addressing the interrelationships between urban space, lawbreaking, and social

control, Theo Kindynis (2017) has been engaged in ‘urban exploration’, the ‘practice of researching, gaining access to, and documenting abandoned, disused, forgotten, non-public, and otherwise off-limits spaces’ (p. 982). This reminds us of Tulke’s (2017) reference to the Athenian cityscape during the crisis: that the years of political conflict, austerity measures, and stagnation brought about ‘ruptures’ in the urban landscape, activating ‘new surfaces and spaces’, spaces that witness urban ruins, vacancy, and decay (p. 202). Kindynis (2019) relies on his ongoing research into ‘urban exploration’, intending to connect it ‘with an ethnographic excavation of the material traces of graffiti found in these sites...’ (p. 27). Research of this kind responds to the enquiries of ‘ghost ethnography’, a recent methodological orientation that highlights ‘the interpretation of material and atmospheric traces’ (p. 27). Armstrong (2010) points to the potential of ‘ghost ethnography’ to excavate these traces ‘that have been inscribed into the materiality of place’ and leave them ‘speak’ for themselves’ (p. 246). This quest for the recently emergent methodological orientation of ‘ghost ethnography’ provided the new potential for my research. The contribution concerns especially the visualised perspective and component of this doctoral project, where not only I documented these sites and their traces, but I also detected and excavated further traces afterwards, via the 3D scanning dynamic. The ephemeral nature of the preserved and visualised traces in my research is also of pivotal importance, given that ghost ethnography emphasises absence (Kindynis, 2019, p. 27). Equally, ‘spectral ethnography’ constitutes ‘an anthropology of people, places, and things that have been removed... or abandoned to the flows of time and space’ (Armstrong, 2010: 243). That is why Kindynis (2019) refers to traces that are ‘either unsuccessfully removed or simply worn and weathered...’, these are known as “ghosts” (p. 27). Let us go back to Chapter 6 (6.5) where we saw a ten-year temporal panorama of the decaying of a billboard. This case study may witness, in a visualised way, the whole course of the crisis. From the advertisements of luxury promoting a ‘better life’, the political parties, seductive holidays, and expensive nightlife, we moved towards the site’s gradual decline until the hoarding’s total extinction. These traces are, to use Jeff Ferrell’s term, ‘lost ecologies’: spatially and temporally interstitial urban ‘ruins’ (2004: 258; 2015).

(iv) The fourth contribution deals with how the outcomes of 3D scanning/modelling experimentation can comprise imagery of ruins. This suggested making maps by hijacking the already-available Google Maps (Chapter 5: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6). The ‘de-maps’ can be distributed, accessible, and visited by potential visitors/viewers/wanderers in a virtual or physical space. For this purpose, I will refer to how I achieved to produce ruins through

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practice on the already established ruins of the crisis in the Athenian landscape. Going back to Kindynis's (2019) concept of abandoned spaces, ruins, and their ghost traces, we notice that the author introduces one more term: places considered 'architectural glitches' (p. 27). According to Kindynis (2019), as the city is 'continually retrofitted, renovated, and reconfigured' these 'intervening spaces' (glitches) are trapped, existing as '*holes* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) or *bubbles* (Sloterdijk, 2011) between the rigidly rectilinear planes of late capitalist urbanism' (p. 27). In my project, not only did I become aware of these spaces due to the crisis and record them, but I also proceeded to further excavate and even produce ruins thanks to 3D modelling and photogrammetry. Hence, on the one hand, I was able to contribute an extra dimension of imagery to the existing scholarly research (mostly relying on photography) thanks to practice-based methodologies. On the other hand, I achieved to interrogate the use of 3D scanning/modelling itself and contribute new insight into explorations that seek alternative usages of the tools and more creative experimentations. Indeed, in response to the glitches referred to above, I accepted any randomly made misuse in favour of the practice and ruin-making. The resulting outcomes were fragmented (fragments of reality themselves), with holes, in some cases like bubbles, and blurry or indistinct areas, adding a new layer of ruins to the Athenian imagery of crisis. Besides, the former Athenian realities I was able to retrieve via Google Maps (the whole city was scanned by Google) also had deformations, blurry areas, and misshapen aspects. My produced models were able to act as stand-alone objects, independent of rules and subject to accuracy and perfection. They did not mimic the physical world of the cityscape; through the holes, curves, fragmented edges, and dysfunctions of the 3D processes, they addressed a visual body of remnants of the recent era of the crisis. As far as the interrogation of the main tool of research, 3D scanning, is concerned, based on Agisoft's 'About' and 'History', fundamental values of the software, such as '3D spatial data to be used in GIS applications, cultural heritage documentation...' were re-examined. The ruins produced by the research were placed on GIS options, such as Google Maps, allowing a viewer/visitor to virtually wander in the cityscape of the crisis, and encounter places that the passers-by may have overlooked. The reference to 'cultural heritage documentation...' may respond to how these subject-matters are put on display as present ruins, co-existing in the very same place, Athens, with the remainders of the past. Along these lines, the emergent contribution also engages with the unique way of using software to respond to enquiries about one's project.

Making maps of the skin, the 'de-maps', functioned to distribute my visual engagements to others. To share my wanderings, the periodical fieldworks, the information I encountered,

what made me take a picture of it, and so on (Chapter 5: 5.5, and 5.6). By hijacking Google Maps, I crept into Google's decision to visually hijack our cities' realities first. Google has the authority and the hegemonic power to record our world and our cities, inch by inch (Chapter 5: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6). This is how, on this already hijacked map, I decided to put my glitches, my 'ruins', and give prominence to the 'in-between' spaces (Kindynis, 2019, p. 27). Through its lust for mapping the whole world, Google has no interest in demonstrating the importance of a place in a crisis, its unique signs that witness this crisis, as a human subject, the flaneur, has encountered and detected via an immersive experience of both the crisis and its visual imagery. In this way, the *glitches* (Kindynis, 2019), *holes* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), and *bubbles* (Sloterdijk, 2011) placed on an ordinary Google Map act as 'in between spaces', functioning 'as time capsules: a kind of accidental, historic cache of material culture'. (Kindynis, 2019, p. 27). An illustrative example of a de-map is provided in Appendix 1, where the concept of making a map like this is described in detail. Each pin functions as a 'time capsule', embedding the material culture of a specific site.

Indeed, some of the pins correspond to sites that were visually examined periodically for years. Consequentially, a pin-'time capsule' can comprise a diverse material of temporal layers and their aspects, socio-political information of a specific era, and so on. This is how a map produces a kind of 'visual history', initiating the creation of a myth about a specific site/place/spot/urban object. The embedded visual material in the pins can include various stages of a spot's metamorphosis, screenshots of 3D models, photogrammetries, and unique objects-ruins that emerged from this place as part of the practice or further practice inspired by this place. For instance, in the discussed visitable map in Appendix 1, two cases in pins illustrate how the urban imagery and the 3D scanning methods provided the impetus for further experimentation in the field of printmaking; the results were also uploaded in the corresponding pin. To be precise, the fourth project, "Typostar" Closed Store', demonstrates how specific stages or options of the utilised software, Photoscan Pro, prompted me to start seeing the virtual outcome as a vehicle for a palimpsest printing process in traditional printmaking (etching). The pin of the sixth project, 'The Closed Store in the Mets area', includes material that shows how the produced imagery of the referential spot inspired a layering printing process where multiple stratifications of prints comprise the outcomes and afterwards became a mural installation. The resulting outcome can be seen in Appendix 2, named 'The Hartley Library Mural Installation'.

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This is how the material culture of a spot infuses it with a unique identity and finally relates it to the broader imagery, namely the skin. Besides, in the case of Greek history, ruins and myths are firmly connected with identity and national imagination. This issue was broadly examined throughout the thesis and, specifically, in the Introduction ('Forays into theory), in Chapter 1: 1.5; Chapter 3; Chapter 5: 5.2. As Chilidis (2007) remarks, the Greek state has used the ancient material culture 'to purify and connect the present to a monumentalized national past. Antiquities were used to give a bodily experience of the past and to create a common Hellenic identity...' (p. 235). Chilidis (2007) also refers to Hamilaki's argument that a myth becomes naturalized and an accepted framework if it occupies a significant position in the national imagination (p. 234). Therefore, the material culture and the myths produced may ingrain an extra dimension in the formation of identity. As I showed in Chapter 5 (5.3, 5.4) the potential distribution of a map is an easy task, given that Google itself furnishes various options such as a link to share, sharing via Facebook, Twitter, email, or 'embed on one's site'. This multivalent option has great potential for a wider public. In this way, a prospective viewer may be anyone who has access to a mobile phone, a computer, and so on. It might be someone just curious to see what this map of the Athenian skin of crisis includes. The virtual viewer becomes a visitor and a wanderer at the same time. They have the option to visit my pins, other places led by curiosity, or both. This immersive experience may prompt them to visit the real spots someday and see on their own if, for example, an urban object is still there, if it carries on being the armature of an urban activity, etc.

According to a survey made by *Enterprise Apps Today* (D'Souza, 2023), recent statistics (February 2023) revealed that Google Maps is 'the most widely used navigation application worldwide', is used 'daily by around 5 million websites', and 'accounts for 154.4 million users per month'. Indeed, '54% of smartphone users used Google Maps to find their way around in 2021' (D'Souza, 2023). Thus, hijacking a broadly used map for practice purposes in order to materialise a wandering process and visually distribute new urban imageries, is a multivalent decision as a contribution. People are accustomed to using maps from their mobile phones, and, for this reason, they have also been used by various agents, even in the case of the Athenian cityscape. In responding to their efforts, new potential and contributions may emerge. In Chapter 2, 2.3, 'Derma – the skin of the city', I examined a map of this kind created by *Urban Layers* (2021). However, the available material addresses mere images depicting graffiti and street art, mostly gathered around the city centre. Finally, *Urban Layers* considers the new Athenian reality as a new industry of tourism. Through

their website, the suggested and directed guides to the sightseeing of the crisis comprise a body of wittingly collected material. It is a biased body of selected graffiti/street art as ‘works of art’ produced by ‘writers’ or ‘artists’, renowned local ones or internationally acclaimed through invitation. Because of that, we are not aware of the existence of a skin phenomenon in Athens; we merely understand that Athens in crisis has a number of graffiti and street art pieces valuable for a new mainstream trend for tourism—an industry played upon the crisis. Parallel to Google’s aim to have full omnipotence on our territories, another hegemonic power emerged and was examined in Chapter 2, 2.6, and especially in Chapter 7, namely the state’s role and the municipality of Athens’ political promotion through cleaning strategies of vanishing the human imprints and echoes on the urban surfaces, namely the skin itself. In section 2.6, ‘The “Clean City”’, I referred to one of the numerous posts of the mayor, where a ‘new application’, *Draseis* («Δράσεις», 2020), makes use of a map. Its pins correspond to actions (such as cleaning, anti-graffiti, etc.) within the urban space, that take place in the relevant locations. As a counter-response to this shift from Instagram posts to a virtual map and the vanishing of the skin, I juxtapose my maps and their glitches [‘in-between spaces’, as Kindynis (2019, p. 27) refers to above] to show that the skin is reshaped and reborn and does not abate given the circumstances of the crisis.

(iv) The fourth contribution points to how Google Maps was utilised as an alternative research tool (Chapter 5). My attempt to discover novel vehicles for practice-based research led me to deal with how the use of Google Maps acted as a ‘time machine’. A ‘time-travel’ device to gain access to and retrieve former layers of the skin is the only way to have direct, fast, and easy access to the recent historical past of the urban space. This contribution addresses how a normally perceived tool of everyday life activated a body of imagery, namely valuable visual resources, for further practice and writing. Hence, with respect to this contribution, what makes this doctoral research project distinct is that it takes an ordinary GIS application, able to be used by anyone, and renders it a research tool for reading and further interpreting a contemporary socio-political frame (crisis). This has also been one of my intentions for contributions to knowledge: to demonstrate how alternative sources, that generate or encompass image production, are equally essential to bibliographic resources.

My research practice relevant to recording, photography, and documentation may be divided into two phases: before 2018 and from 2018 (when the PhD project set out) and during it (2018–2022). This shift from freelance practice to research marked a broadening of my methods and tools as well as a deeper consideration of the practice as research. For instance, as I have highlighted so far, I extended my methodology from merely photographic

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(panoramic or focal single picture) to multiples, details, detecting texture, etc.; thereby, a scanning procedure from focal subjects to the broader sceneries. As I explained before, recordings realised before 2018 took place on a periodical basis: 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2016 (Chapter 4: 4.1.2 and 4.1.3). They addressed both traces with direct socio-political connotations (e.g., slogans and relevant visuals) and the multiple layering of posters that gradually hijacked the shopfronts' surfaces as evidence of the deepening crisis and its impact on commerce. However, during the PhD project (from 2018 on), I encountered one more limitation of the defined scope. My previously documented material was limited to specific places or urban objects (e.g., post boxes) at specific times (Chapter 6). Although in my research since 2018, the emergence of an Athenian skin phenomenon, organically evolved and unique, prompted me to engage with wider areas, the potential of gaining access to past material was necessary to link and demonstrate its successiveness and continuity. Because of this issue, I searched for ways to achieve potential access to past city-layers; a 'time machine' not only for my own recorded spots (from 2018 on or those before) but even for the whole city if necessary. Finally, the role of this 'time-travel' device was covered by Google Maps. A means that offered access to a few past layers of the city via an immersive experience of regaining prior actualities. Google Maps proved to be a valuable research tool during the material collection for the doctoral project. It provided various urban stages, for instance, the condition of stores that were open at the beginning of the crisis, witnessed their mass closure, and testified to their gradual transformation into a testament of a daily live stream of the crisis, revealing the socio-political circumstances of the city (Spyropoulos, 2013). Another pivotal investigation through Google Maps was how the sites of luxury advertising, namely the billboards, finally declined, were assimilated within the skin, and became ruins of the crisis. Indicative approaches were developed in Chapter 6, in the following sections: 1) 6.3, 'Case Study: "B & K" Closed Store', and 2) 6.5, 'Décollage: restoring the 'derma' of anti-spectacle, Décollage and Collage: the organic derma'.

It was also used as an alternative virtual perspective in discussions with collage and décollage, and finally, it was engaged in research in conjunction with new technologies as art practices, such as the 3D-scanned scenes. In my thesis, the conceptual engagement with collage stressed its potential to merge opposed and seemingly disparate aspects into a new unity. Google Maps as a research tool was established to be the opposite, namely, to be utilised as an 'excavator' of the archaeological past of the traces of the crisis. It was thus linked to décollage, raising further bibliographic discussion, and finally contributed to it via its visual outcomes (Chapter 6). Let us remember the terminology of décollage as the

‘reverse of collage, achieved by finding layers [of posters and billboard notices] eroded and peeled away to reveal the realities that were hidden beneath’ (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006, p. 87). My virtual décollages achieved dug up a sequence of chronological imageries and put them together within a contemporary archaeologic frame, to re-imagine the history of the skin of crisis.

(v) This final section addresses the potential contribution of the project to a wider discussion on identity as a successive historic palimpsest. Therefore, instead of following an already bibliographically saturated field for visually examining the urban space (a graffiti and street art narrative), the shift to a skin approach set out to achieve a contribution to disciplines engaged with research in the quest of identity (archaeology, social anthropology, ethnography, history, etc.).

The relevance of this doctoral thesis and its practice to fragmented realities and ruins designates a firm connection with layers and remnants of the past. If we consider how the recent modern and contemporary Greek identities have been formulated, we may realise the significance of the addition of one more layer, the current one, in this sequence of fragments. Even at an early stage of the thesis, I discussed that a recent indicative example of fragments of pivotal importance, in the quest of national imagination, has been the Parthenon Sculptures ‘Marbles’ (Chapter 1: 1.5). In fact, a human dimension has been attributed to the sculptures (‘anthropomorphism’), as their fragmentation has been identified with ‘pain of dismemberment and mutilation, homeland-exile, reunification-repatriation, recollection of fragments, reconstitution of the whole’ (Hamilakis, 2007, p. 277). This national urgency of reassembling fragments of the past with the present, ‘a nostalgia for the whole’ (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 132), furnishes this research with extra significance. If we consider the fragments of the crisis (contemporary) as ‘living entities’ (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 132) of the present [similar to the Parthenon Sculptures], then they could function as a generative force for linking the present collective memory to the future identity. This approach as a contribution would undeniably address a broader pertinence of continuity, namely, a diptych that comprises the past remnants (e.g., antiquity) and the current ruins (crisis) folded out in a wider concept within the same cityscape. Besides, this doctoral engagement aimed at pointing to one more historic layer of the Greek skin. I proceeded to connect the most recent history of Greece, namely the Olympic Games ‘Athens 2004’ at the outset of the 21st century, to the crisis-era that ensued immediately after.

Conclusion

This decision had a twofold significance apropos of its contribution to the matter of identity, history, and public space. On the one hand, the Olympics were the most recent example in the 21st century of a strategic attempt to revive the ancient past and affiliate it with the present in a mythical dimension (Sakellariadi, 2008, p. 130). On the other hand, the crisis that followed some years later, having a tangible and intangible impact, affected dramatically the image of the Greek cities (public space) and subconsciously shaped the collective memory, and vice versa. Indeed, the Olympic Games ‘Athens 2004’ acted as a reaffirmation of possession of the past, suggesting a revived pride for the mythical and the glorious. Yet, the recent crisis and its impact on people caused an interruption in this manipulated identity, and thus, in my research, it was examined as an additional layer of continuity within the wider frame of a historic palimpsest. Relying on the skin analogy, the research project forayed into bringing to light that each stratification has acted as a sedimentary stratum of historical development, thereby affecting, and drastically influencing the identity as well. In this direction, the Athenian urban imagery functioned as an alternative source for reading and perceiving everyday narratives of the crisis, which, otherwise, may have remained neglected and forgotten. As the mythical is justified by ruins and remnants of the past (Hamilakis, 2007; Chilidis, 2007, pp. 234–235), the urban imagery of the crisis was examined as if it were ‘the myth of the crisis’ through its own ruins.

3. Implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research

The detection of anonymous traces in the urban imagery of Athens and their participation in the collaged skin was the fruit of a long-lasting connection with the city, sharpening my observation skills as well. Long-standing experience through wandering, documentation, and practice, as well as a resulting accumulative visual archive, mapped both the general picture (skin) and its constituent elements. As for my role, a major stimulus has always been to act as a ‘saviour’ by preserving this material culture of the crisis for future purposes, even if they have remained unknown at present. In the future, this material could be valuable for fields such as archaeology, history, ethnography, etc., considering ghost ethnography’s aims. However, given that ‘ghost ethnography’ is quite a recent methodological approach to examining notions such as absence and the interpretation of material and intangible remnants (Kindynis, 2019, p. 26), it mostly relies on and promotes (auto)ethnography, which is profoundly subjective, contemplative, imaginative, and (even) speculative (Armstrong, 2010, p. 246). For this reason, although my research has counted almost fifteen years of

recordings, further research, in the long run, would be able to provide a greater panorama of layers throughout the decades. Nonetheless, the body of visuals presented in the doctoral thesis focused on the most recent layer—that is, the crisis—to furnish evidence for future utilisation within a wider frame of scholarly interest and investigation. Within this broader scientific framework of research, most engaged with the humanities, by preserving the materiality of the crisis, one could provide the historian of the future with those narratives in a visual form that would never be published by the official media. This thought may remind us of Giroud's (2008) argument that it is our own responsibility to save and document the [Parisian] urban billboards, which echoes our course in time (p. 10). Equally, François Bon's (207) argument, that the peeled-off skins of the city provide a material existence to what would remain untold to be added to the historical narrative (p. 166). Suggesting a novel methodology and its outcomes became my objective for contribution via 'time-lapses' or layers of the Athenian imagery to denote its process of metamorphosis. In dialogue with an interdisciplinary bibliographic investigation, this project explored how art approaches and the outcomes of practice-based research can contribute, in turn, to a wider scholarly interest in the Athenian imageries of the crisis. In this quest, the artist's role was proven to be multifaceted by bringing these imageries to light and showcasing their great narrative potential. That is why I never intervened materially in urban scenery and remained the 'medium', the intermediary who made room and gave voice to anonymity not to be 'forgotten, neglected, and refused' (Giroud, 2008, p. 11).

Based upon the final part of this research project (Chapter 7) and the new political conditions addressing the cleaning strategies of Athenian authorities, I will carry on examining the skin of Athens and recording how this new development will affect or have an impact on it. I aim to return to the same spots (or add new ones) and investigate their future conditions. As the main body of my project was engaged with the closed stores as ruins of consumption—and in most cases, I also relied on Google Maps for detecting their gradual deterioration—one of my prospective aims will be to observe and record their future. For instance, will they remain in their former condition, making room for the new skin? Will they reopen their doors as stores once more or obtain a new role? The future research, based on wandering, observation, and recording, will be able to address if the 'clean city', as the authorities intended, was successful or if the prospective socio-political conditions will be inscribed in each new epidermis of Athens.

This 'cleaning strategy' may also pose limitations on my future research but, simultaneously, address a new scope of discussion and practice. Any alteration of the urban landscape

Conclusion

resulting in renovations (e.g., ‘Grand Promenade’), a lack of available spaces due to stricter laws, or intensive policing by municipal officials are some factors that may considerably change the field of research. However, as the case of the ‘Grand Promenade’ has illustrated so far and the appropriation of the newly introduced volumes within the cityscape, namely the jardinières, any prospective change can result in a reformulation of the skin itself. Thus, a new scope of discussion and research may bring to light a shift of the skin from one place to another, a vanishing in one area, or density in another.

The same research can be constructed in a new context in accordance with a given location and within a different setting. One of my recent attempts addressed the urban space of the third-biggest city in Greece, Patras. I examined how this specific cityscape was affected by the pandemic, how prior layers of former realities of the city were still displayed during the lockdowns, and their course towards destruction while fading. Any new activity referring to the few events that took place in between the lockdowns was also included. The scope of my recording was the abandoned public billboards and bus stops full of posters in shreds that formulated the imagery of a new crisis, that of COVID-19. This material was developed in a body of research (in the form of a scientific paper) that was submitted to *Intellect Books* and finally published [*Urban Fragments ‘on hold’: Reflections of Covid-19 in the urban Greek environment*] in their peer-reviewed journal *Jaws* (Journal of Arts Writing by Students) at the end of 2022 (DOI: https://doi.org/10.1386/jaws_00033_1)

Relying on the knowledge of the practice-based methodology I have acquired so far; the new body of work will encompass future fragments of the same or forthcoming detected spots. Together with the current ones, these prospective ones will be able to chart extra temporal layers as additional steps towards mapping the prospective historic narratives of the city’s metamorphosis in the long run. Let us remember Brassaï (1899–1984) and his work, where ‘the signs and images drawn or scratched on the walls of Paris fascinated him from the early 1930s to the end of his life’ (Ziebinska-Lewandowska, 2016, p. 40). In my case, this project can continue for decades, becoming a life-long process. In Brassaï’s case, the camera acted ‘as an instrument of urban dissection’ (Ziebinska-Lewandowska, 2016, p. 40). Today, Dibazar and Naef (2019) argue that our walk within the cityscape is drenched with images and signs of a digital era; GPS and smartphones with cameras embedded are integral parts of our lives, as ‘we document, navigate, and imagine the urban street in new ways’ (p. 9). In a lifetime’s project, any new technological development and advancement relevant to image capturing and making may be utilised for future urban anatomy. Even though the future of the virtual world is unknown, today we notice that the wide access to ‘digital image-making’

and ‘image-sharing technologies’ has rendered images ‘new social functions and cultural meanings’ (Dibazar, Naef, 2019, p. 9).

The virtual imageries produced through photogrammetric processes have nourished my visual perspective and may foster a new dimension for future practice. Images of the rotated projects on Photoscan can be used as shots, and in printed form, they could suggest new collaged assemblages, giving prominence to fragmentation and layering. The .jpeg (texture) and .tiff (fragments) files have the potential to be printed, overpainted, or reprinted on top with traditional printmaking techniques (e.g., collagraphs), expanding the connection and intersection between the digital and the analogue in further experimentation. Apart from any utilisation in a two-dimensional space (paper, print, etc.), there is substantial potential for three-dimensional approaches as well. The resulting 3D models on Photoscan and their numerous viewpoints through rotation (virtual objects) open the possibility for sculptural developments. The bubble-like reliefs and shapes of some of the projects made me think about how polyurethane foam can produce free-standing maquettes or act as the base (armature) for further sculptural experimentations. These skeletons may be dressed in prints, while remnants of collected posters can be glued onto them, suggesting a new layer of skin on top of them. Another option is how cement can be applied on top to reinforce these initial foamed shapes and produce more concrete sculptural fragments.

Appendix 1 De-mapping the Map of Athens in crisis

1.1 The skin of the city is the map of the crisis

The PhD viva exhibition (as a presentation) took place on 1st December 2022 in the form of a virtual guided tour and was held on an online Google Map. Acting as a guide, I suggested this virtual performance as a way to unfold and approach multiple strands of my research. Therefore, this performance mapped almost the whole course of research via visiting various pins on ordinary Google Maps. During this alternative tour, we mostly visited ‘ruins’ of the crisis as exhibits, or sites that functioned as matrixes that accommodated socio-political echoes responding to the crisis.

The virtual wandering started with a brief theoretical introduction by making use of Borges’s story ‘On Exactitude in Science’ (1946) to connect it with my case of research, Athens, addressing mapping and de-mapping connotations. Then, we gradually moved towards a virtual tour on Google Maps. This initial theoretical approach was based on two parts, as the story itself is split into two periods via the use of an allegory of generations by its author. Drawing on this motif, I built on my mapping and de-mapping interpretations.

1.1.1 1st part: the Mapping

As I already mentioned, Borges divides his fable into two major parts. In the first part, the author refers to an ‘empire’ and ‘cartography’; the perfection of map-making and the obsession with this workmanship ‘which [finally] coincided point for point with it [empire]’. The connotations of my case of study, Athens, deal with how the Hellenic (Greek) state, as an ideal, suggests civilisation, cultural preservation, continuity and identity through ruins, namely past artefacts. Indeed, this ideal was founded in the modern Greek state, after its independence (1832) and the contemporary state at the outset of the millennium, the Olympic Games ‘2004’. Overall, as Plantzos (2008, p. 11) argues the development of the Greek national identity in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century depended heavily on the idea of continuity in itself; indeed, it was still prevalent even just before the crisis, showing no signs of abating.

1.1.2 2nd part: the De-mapping

Borges here proceeds to a direct introduction to ‘the following generations’, which were not interested in the made-up maps of ‘forbearers’: for them, the predecessors’ map was ‘useless’. This metaphor can be associated with the Greek economic crisis period. A new reality to be encountered and experienced mostly by the younger generations and how they reacted to the formerly constructed maps (politics, identity, economy). In Borges’ fable (1946), the ancestors’ map was treated by the new generations as follows: with pitilessness, abandoned in the ‘inclemencies of sun and winters’, ‘in the deserts’, thus nowadays we can see ‘tattered ruins of that map’. In the next section, I attempt a parallelism of how the younger generation in Athens visually responded to the former ‘map’ by their predecessors, during the economic crisis.

1.2 The skin of the crisis

In the new Greek reality, the skin of the crisis is actually ‘the map that coincides point for point with the city’ (Borges, 1946). In the case of Athens, the de-mapping did not include any displacement of the former map. On the contrary, it took place on top of it, through the visual appropriation of the epidermis of the city (skin). During the crisis era (late 2008 onwards), we notice a direct involvement of people in their everyday condition. Through several acts, such as continuous demonstrations and struggles, people firmly reacted to the impact of the recession on them and the impoverishment that was gradually affecting their lives. In the aftermath of the protests, and as an outcome of the direct reaction to the imposed austerity, the urban space became a ‘contested space’ (Giannitsopoulos and Giannakopoulos, 2010; Karathanasis, 2010) where relations of power and resistance, due to the recession, were taking place visually. Finally, it was the crisis itself and its consequences that de-mapped the prior reality. Within this new imagery, based on Borges’ reference to ‘tattered ruins of that [former] map’, we can still see fragmented ruins of the former Greek realities, as they co-exist and ‘dwell’ with the recent and current crisis ruins, embedded in and constructing the skin.

1.3 Virtual tour on Google Maps (online performance)

Google Maps is an online depiction of the globe, such as the ‘empire’ in Borges’ case, ‘which coincides point for point with it’. Through this guided tour I attempted: first, to achieve a time-lapse journey in selected temporal urban layers that participate in the crisis’ skin. Second, via an alternative tour, to show contemporary ruins and newly developed virtual objects of precise city spots through new technologies. Third, to demonstrate that the products of the crisis (ruins, up-to-date writings, marks, etc.) co-exist with all the former layers of the Athenian historic palimpsest. I achieved to respond to these queries by producing the map shown below (fig. 165) comprised of 11 pins, as well as through a virtual tour of it. The first image (fig. 165) represents a more panoramic view to include the Winchester School of Art, as the base of my research since 2018. The second image (fig. 166) focuses closely on the Greek territory involving my hometown Patras, and Athens as the centre of the investigation.

The map used for this virtual tour can be accessed and visited at the following link:

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1XmwNxeR1eX5N7bujNyGh3SgsWBc1HFo
&usp=sharing](https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1XmwNxeR1eX5N7bujNyGh3SgsWBc1HFo&usp=sharing)

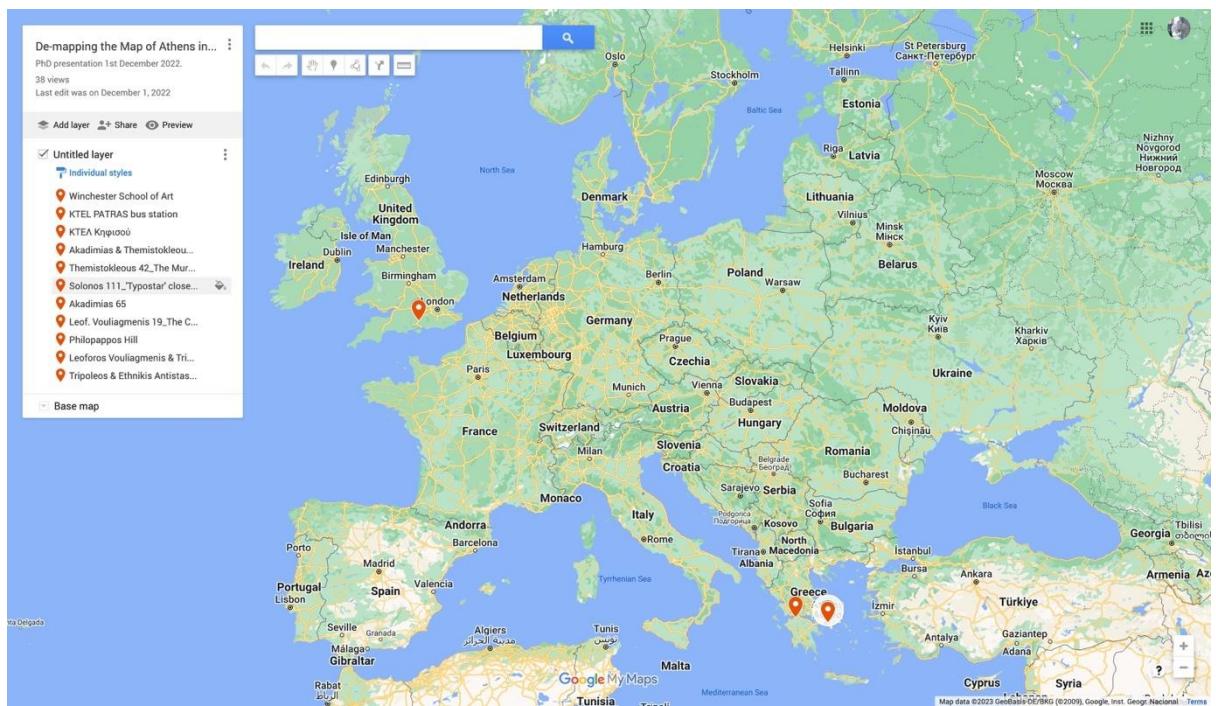


Figure 165 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Panoramic view of the Map, 2023. Google Map Screenshot.

©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2023 Google.

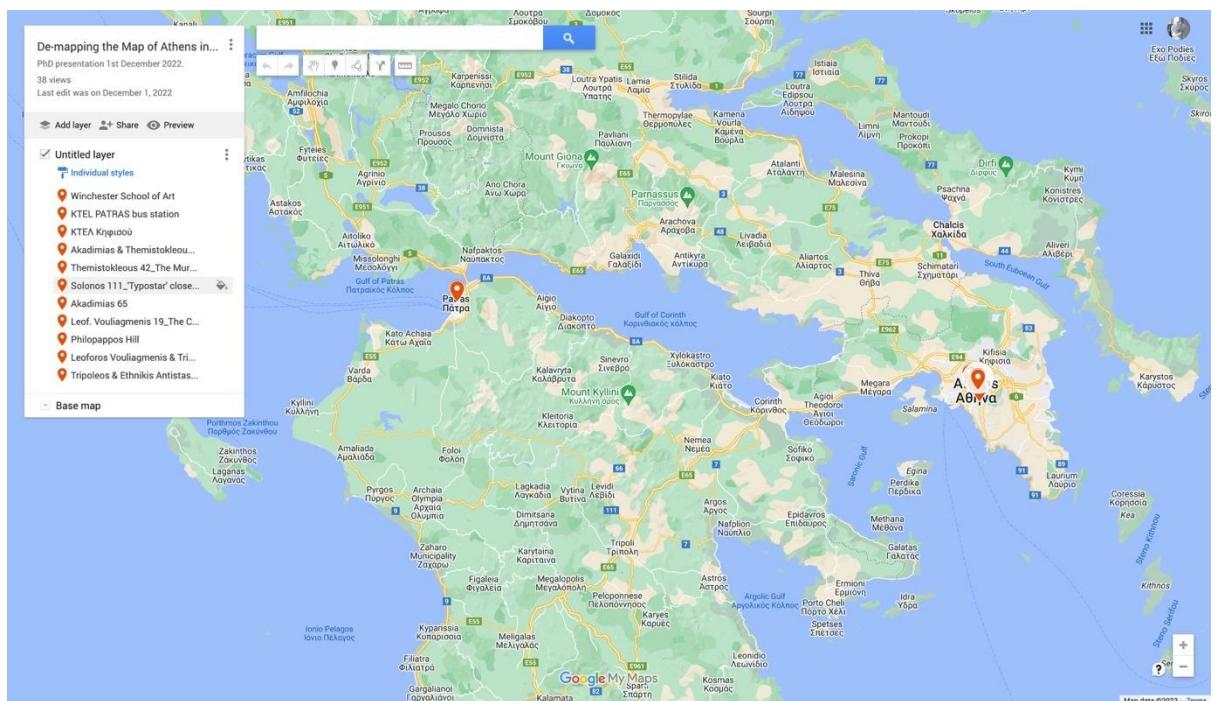


Figure 166 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Close-up of the Map-Patras and Athens view, 2023. Google

Map Screenshot. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2023 Google.

Hence, the three first pins on display address the three places where this research was initiated and has come into being. The first pin below (fig. 167) is related to the Winchester School of Art, where practice, experimentation, and theoretical approach were realised.

Appendix 1

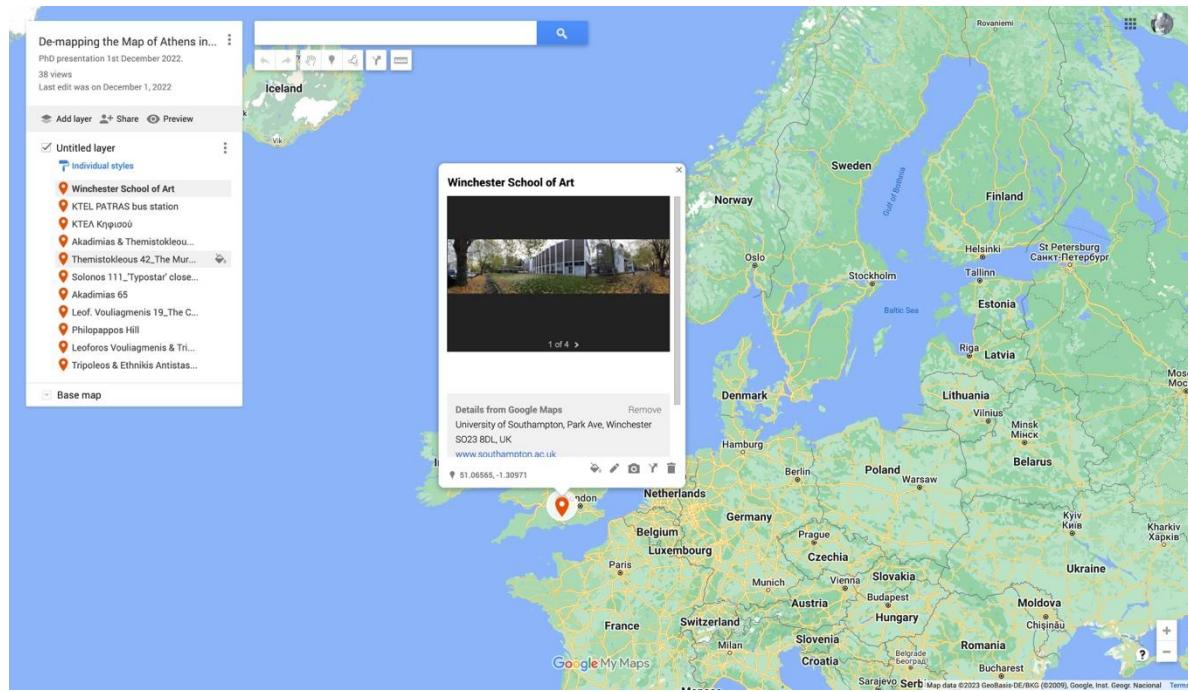


Figure 167 Panagiotis Ferentinos, First pin: Winchester School of Art, 2023. Google Map Screenshot. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2023 Google.

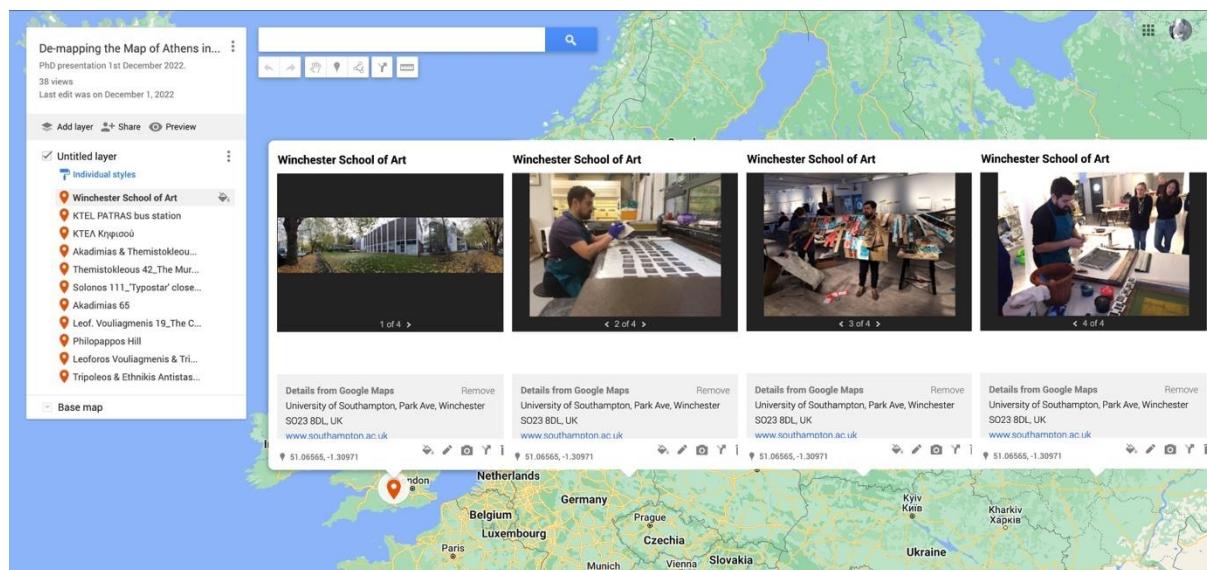


Figure 168 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Images included in the pin, 2023. Google Map Screenshot. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2023 Google.

The pin (fig. 168) embeds four images: the first illustrates the location of the School. The second was taken in the printmaking workshop, showing me while experimenting with printmaking methods (etched plates) to produce printed skins through layering in a palimpsest process. The fourth and fifth images were taken from workshops I guided and was in charge of, sharing my printmaking methods (here, screen-printing) with other students and members of Winchester Trinity. At the end of the workshops, the printing skins

were utilised in costume-making for performative acts, and experimental installations (fig.). Further material can be seen in Appendix 2, which focused on printmaking and practice experimentations addressing the skin.

The second pin introduces Patras (fig. 169), my hometown, from where I was going back and forth to Athens; that is why the embedded image represents the intercity public transport bus service (named ‘KTEL’). Periodical research on Patras’ urban landscape was also carried out, especially during Covid-19, where I addressed the human visual reactions (or a ‘pause’ of action due to lockdowns) within the public space of Patras. A paper titled ‘Urban fragments “on hold”: Reflections of COVID-19 in the urban Greek environment’ was published in *JAWS: Journal of Arts Writing by Students*, 7(1), by *Intellect*, late in December 2022 on this subject.

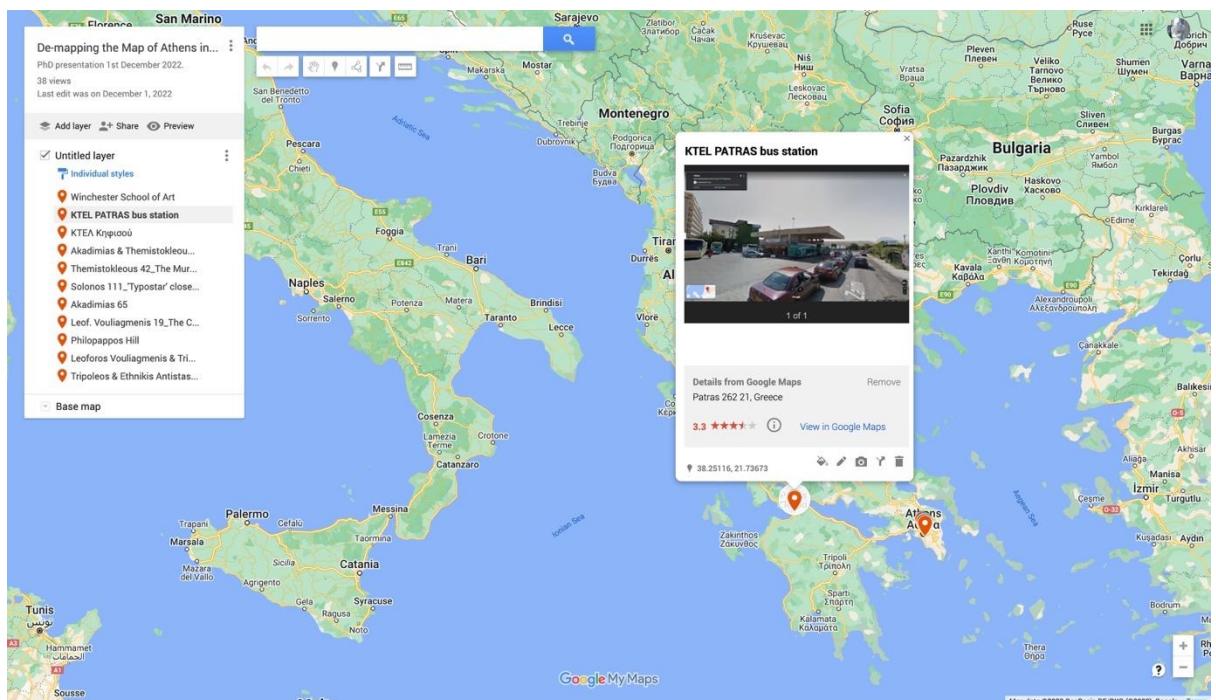


Figure 169 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The intercity public transport bus service of Patras (KTEL)*, 2023.

Google Map Screenshot. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2023 Google.

From Patras intercity public transport bus service, we move forward with the next pin (fig. 169) while arriving at the same intercity bus service in Athens. The local bus service, bus No.051 (from ‘KTEL Kifisou’ to ‘National Theatre’) busses us close to Omonia sq., one of the central squares of Athens. In a 5-10-minute walk, we draw near the area where the next four pins are located. In the following image (fig. 170) we see the located spots.

Appendix 1

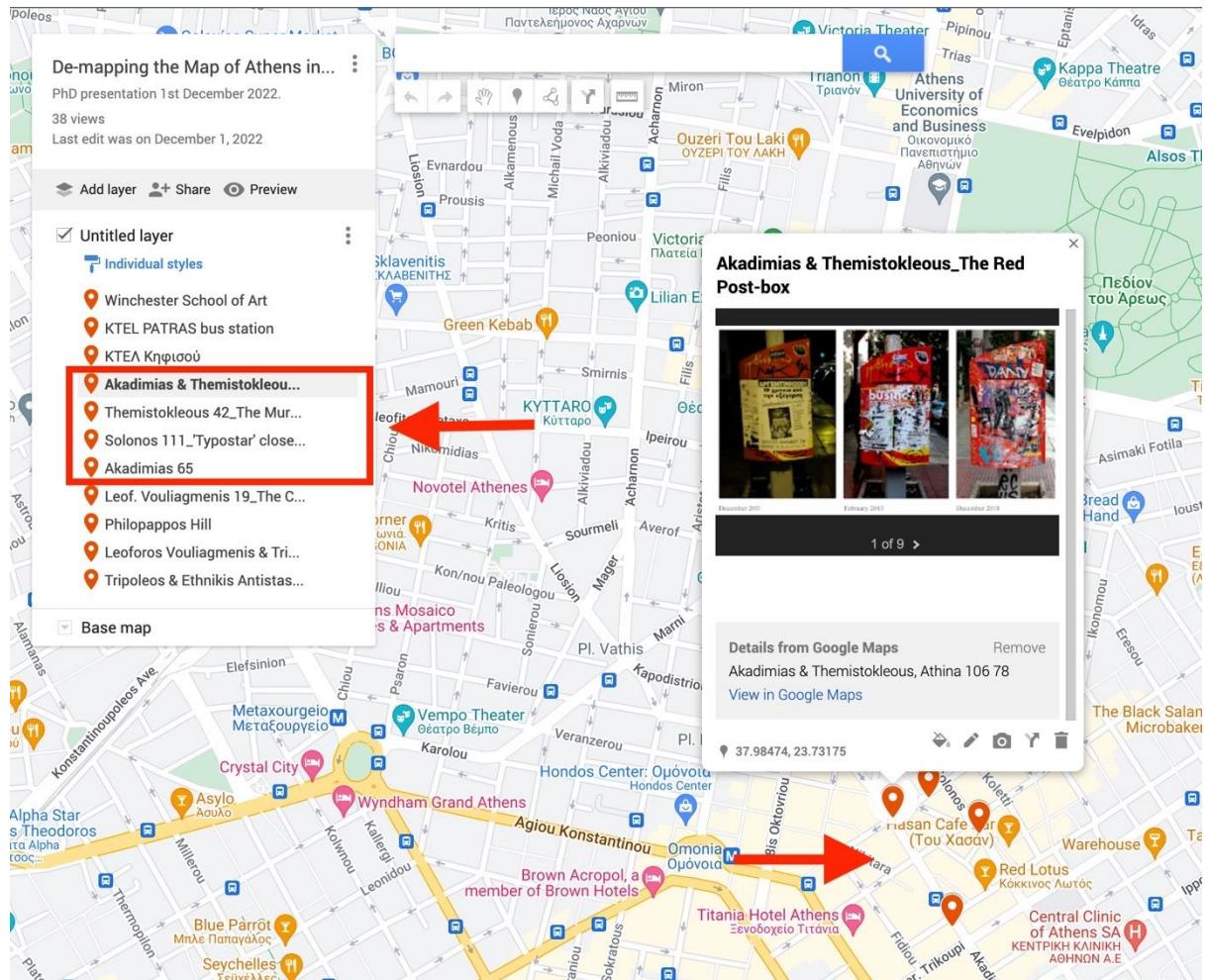


Figure 170 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The four pins focus on spots in the city centre, 2023. Google Map Screenshot. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos ©2023 Google.

The content of the four pins (fig. 170) is indicative of the visual imagery of the crisis that occurred in the city centre and represents the urban ruins that emerged from the long-lasting conditions of the crisis. The selected city spots may be normally considered indifferent or unseen by the passer-by. Yet, they can bear witness to and participate in the skin of the crisis. In addition, the visuals contained in these four pins can be examined and discussed in conjunction with one of the following pins, named 'Pilopappos Hill' (fig. 188) which addresses ruins emanated from another era, remainders from antiquity. Although both layers of ruins, current and ancient ones, co-exist at present, a great emphasis is put on preserving the latest by the official authorities, at the expense of any other historic layer, especially the current one, namely the crisis. This issue has been approached at length throughout the thesis, and, in particular, in the final chapter, Chapter 7, 'The 'Clean City' - Vanishing the Athenian trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies'.

The examined spots were in succession the following ones:

1) A red post-box (fig. 171), that drew my attention years ago; I recorded it numerous times throughout the period of the crisis. The post box has always been in constant metamorphosis, accommodating a wide variety of traces (spay-canned writing, tagging with markers, posters, etc.) while acting as a ‘messenger’ of socio-political information of each period of the crisis. Since 2018, when I embarked on a PhD research and dragged up my formerly collected material, I proceeded to an examination of the content hosted on the post box, such as the written components that the posters provided. It mostly derived from marginalised people who were seeking any available surface within the crowded city centre, and benefit from it for sharing their political opinions or calling for struggle. Tsilimpounidi’s (2015) prior reference to ‘talking walls’, able to ‘narrate counterhegemonic stories from the margins of cultural production’ (p. 33), may unveil how any available surface was a breeding ground for developing a skin of struggle for Athens in crisis.

The following two images (fig. 171-172), uploaded and available on the map, illustrate various stages of the post box’s transformation—in a collaging and de-collaging process—over different phases of the crisis.



Figure 171 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The Red post box: various stages of metamorphosis, 2011-2018. Photography. Akadimias & Themistokleous, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



July 2019

September 2019

December 2019

Figure 172 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Red post box: various stages of metamorphosis, 2019*.

Photography. Akadimias & Themistokleous, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

2) The Yellow Kiosk (fig. 173-174) was formerly acting as a local mini market. The kiosks made their appearance in the early 1900s and had a historic presence in the Athenian landscape. However, the economic crisis, which altered dramatically consumer habits, afflicted the kiosks as well, they tended to become extinct species (Pipinis, 2017). Theodoros Mallios, the president of the Association of Professional Tobacco Suppliers in Athens, argued that at the beginning of 2010, there were 11.000 kiosks. In contrast, in November 2017, their number decreased to almost 5.700, namely only half left. The financial crisis had an impact on them, as well as the growth of retail chain markets hit severely their sector (Mallios, 2017). Before the crisis, the kiosks were found almost everywhere in the Greek cityscape. Considering their considerable size, their fall into a state of dereliction might have rendered them the largest urban objects-ruins of the crisis. Gradually, since their closure, their deserted presence within the cityscape, as abandoned empty ‘cocoons’ (without everyday commodities in them), made room for a new use: their visual appropriation and participation in the skinning process.



Figure 173 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Yellow Kiosk* (panoramic view), 2019. Photogrammetry. Akadimias 65, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 174 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Yellow Kiosk* (close-up), 2019. Photogrammetry. Akadimias 65, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

Appendix 1

3) ‘The Mural Posters’ and 4) “Typostar” Closed Store’. The prior two cases addressed three-dimensional volumes of the city, and stood like ‘objects’ within the cityscape, whereas the two next pins engage with surfaces of buildings.

‘The Mural Posters’ is illustrated and discussed in detail in Chapter 6, 6.7.: ‘The Athenian Derma: The Urban Collage of the Crisis’, where I unfold the polyphonic visual character and the richness of traces that co-exist on a single wall; it is seen and suggested as being an urban collage. “Typostar” Closed Store’ is one more case of a closed store where the surface of its shopfronts was appropriated for urban interventions in constant metamorphosis. References to the closed stores and their new role are expanded throughout the PhD and especially in Chapter 4, in section 4.8. ‘Exploring the immensity of the skin of crisis: Case study: Dafni area’, as well as in Chapter 6, ‘Décollage and Collage: the organic derma’, and, in particular, in section 6.3., ‘Case Study: ‘B & K’ Closed Store’.

In the ‘Typostar’ case, it is essential to stress how the process of making a 3D model (through photogrammetry) while using specific software, Agisoft Metashape (Photoscan Pro), namely the steps and the various options, provided me with suggested skins and even altered the shape of the digital fragment. I refer to this potential in detail in Chapter 4, in sections: 4.2.4. ‘From the digital detail to the virtual fragment: a specific-to-general methodology to simulate the city’s skin’, 4.2.5. ‘Building up the skin: the steps’, 4.2.6. ‘Additional virtual “skins”’. Particularly in the two latest sections, the discussed options functioned as suggested skins on Photoscan—such as ‘Solid’ and ‘Dense cloud classes’ options (fig. 175)—and inspired my analogue printmaking approaches (fig. 176-178). The inked etching plates were used and applied multiple times through the press, resulting in a palimpsest-like organic unity. Afterwards, by applying a tearing-apart process on the edges of the paper, the outcome obtained a fragmented shape indicative of the initial digital fragment on Photoscan.

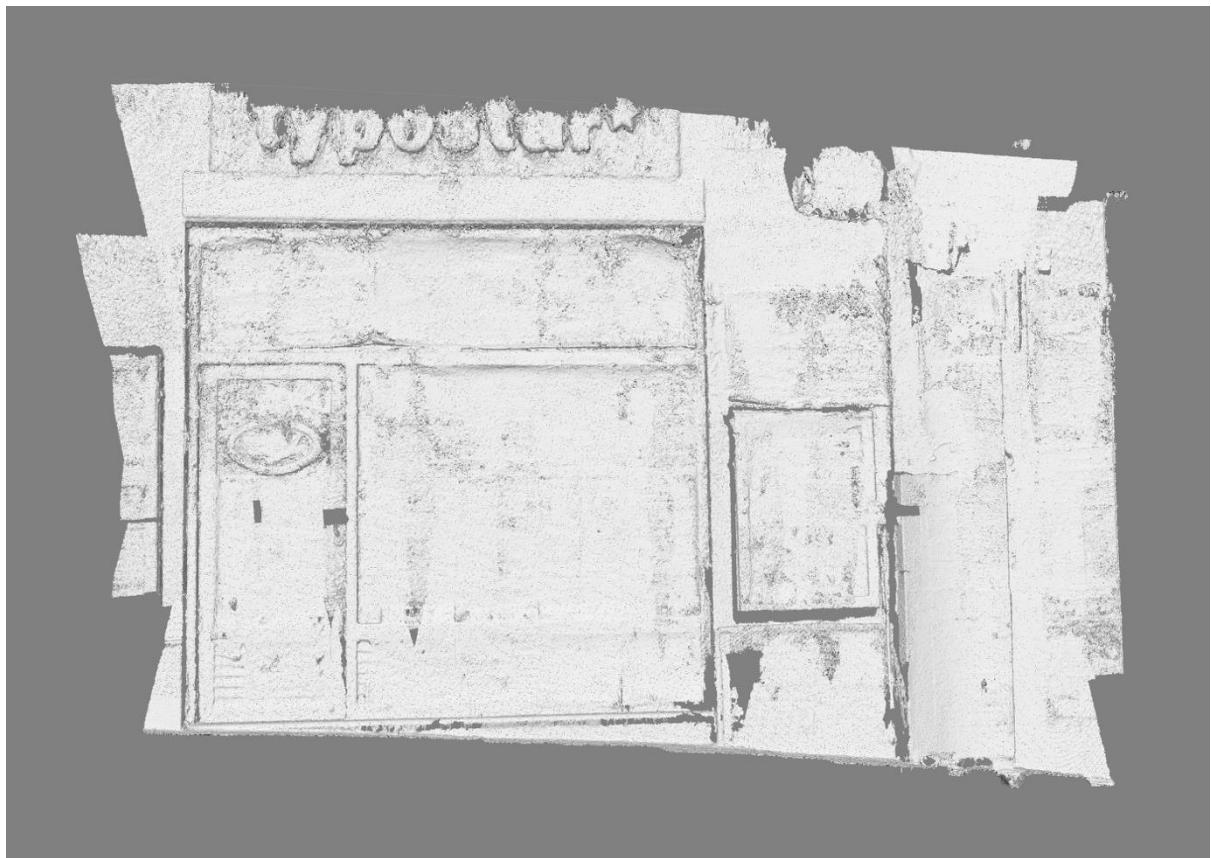


Figure 175 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Typostar closed store: 'Dense Cloud Classes' option on Photoscan, 2019. Photogrammetry. Solonos 111, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

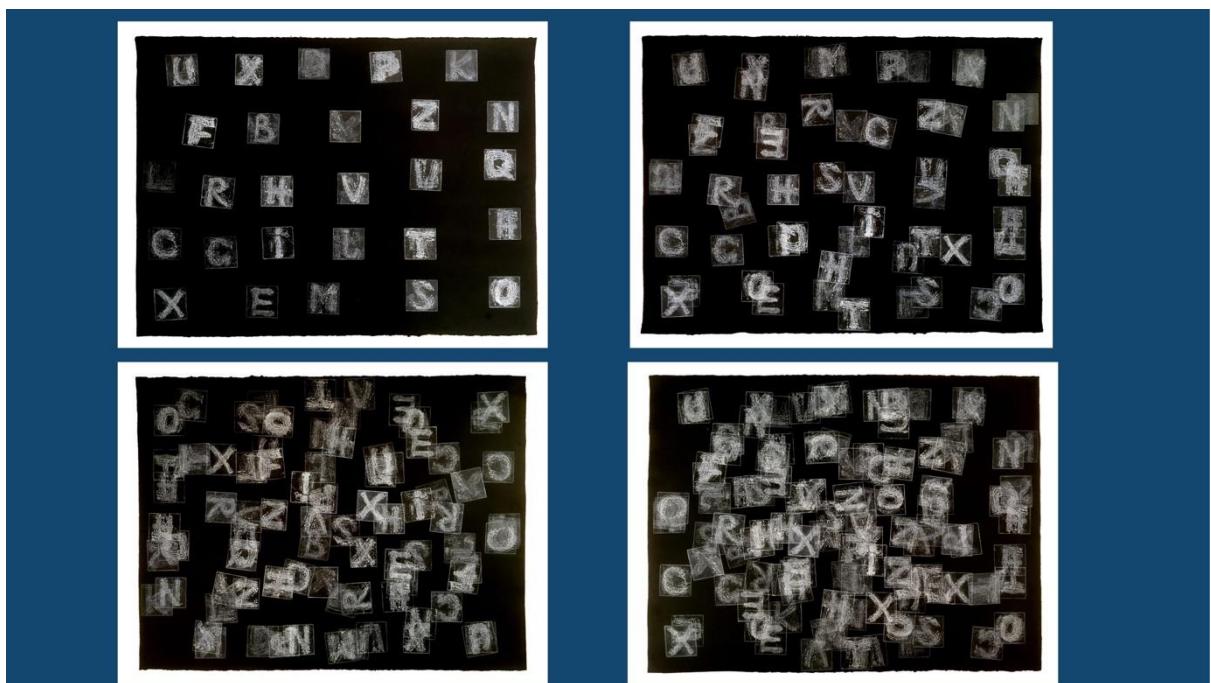


Figure 176 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Etching plates depicting alphabets printed successively in a palimpsest process, 2020. Etching on aluminium. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

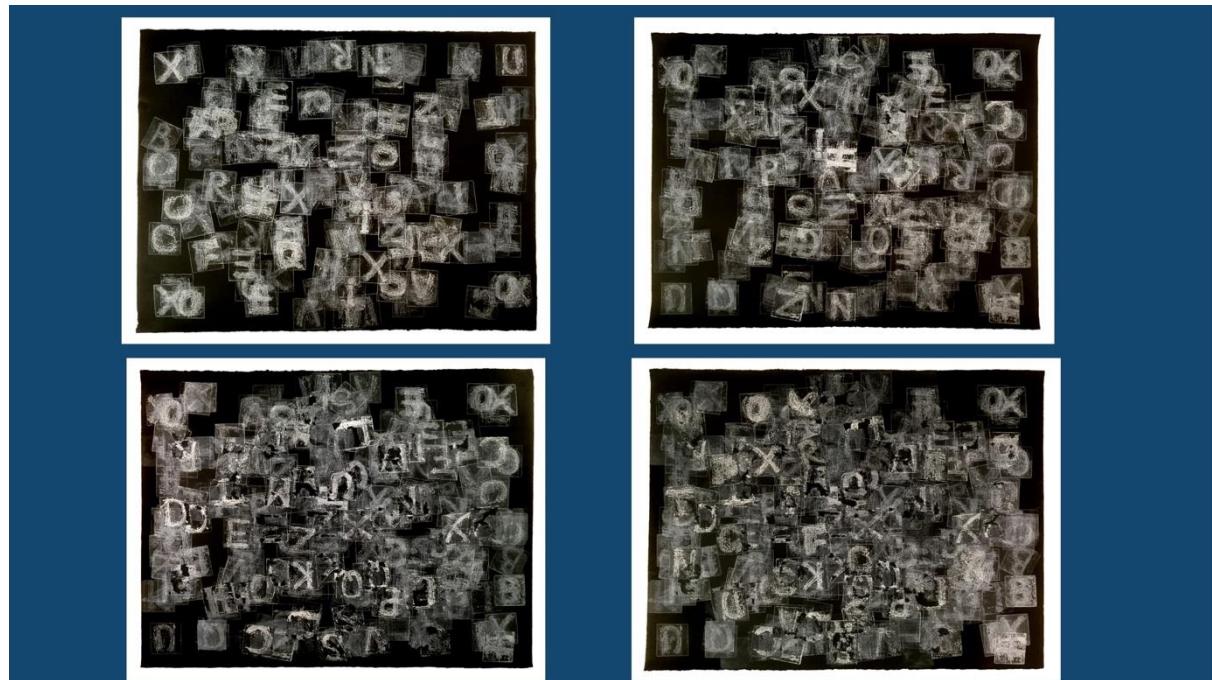


Figure 177 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Etching plates depicting alphabets printed successively in a palimpsest process*, 2020. Etching on aluminium. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

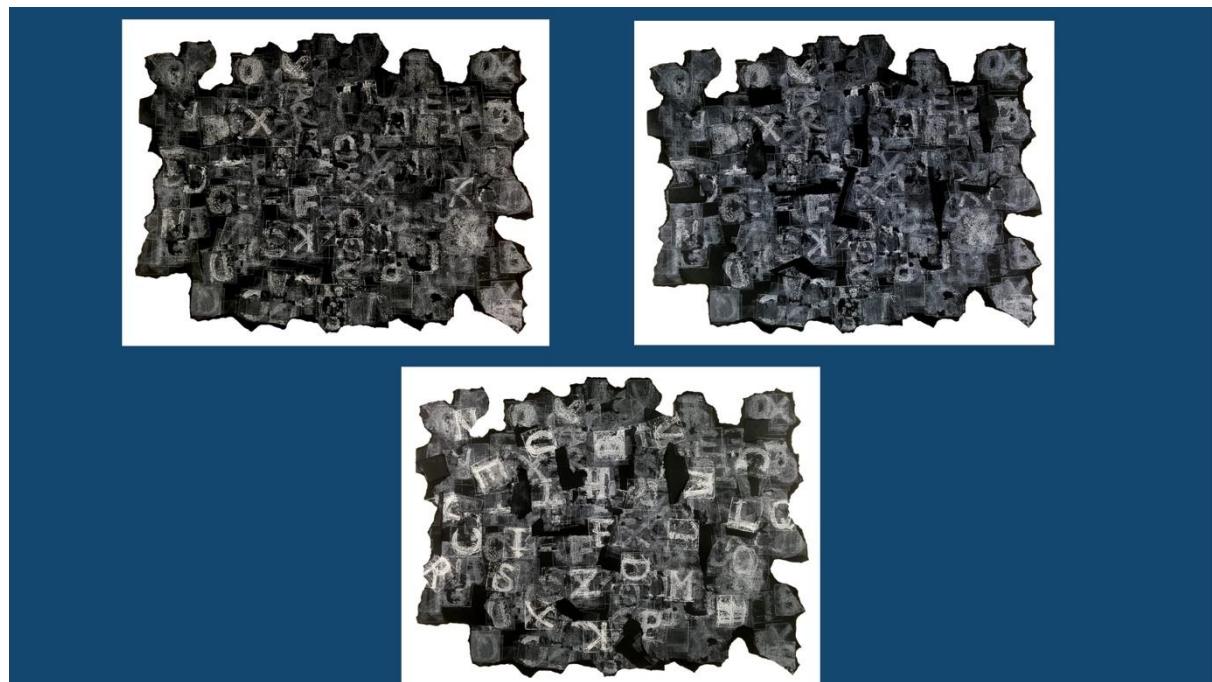


Figure 178 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Etching plates depicting alphabets printed successively in a palimpsest process*, 2020. Etching on aluminium. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

1.4 New technologies: 3D scanning in image making of ruins

So far, the material shown above relied on the adoption of photography and photogrammetry and suggested representational images with relative accuracy of the depicted referents. Without a doubt, those images may allow us to perceive the dereliction that occurred within the Athenian cityscape to some extent. Nonetheless, while preserving periodically temporal and spatial stratifications of the skin of the city, the resulting visual imagery made room for a new potential to produce digital images. Below, I show how I benefited from 3D scanning processes to develop their possibilities for further image-making practice and the production of virtual fragments-ruins. The various option available in Photoscan's toolbar, as well as the dynamic use of the 3D object's rotation, allowed me to benefit from the resulting visuals and go beyond the conventional representation of my subject matters. New fragments resulted in addressing an additional body of ruins as a contribution. The images below (fig. 179-187) are linked to the content of the four pins. These object-ruins may remain in a virtual realm (fig. 179-184), be printed, and hung as prints (fig. 185), be used in conjunction with further development in experimental installations (fig. 186) or used in a laser cutter and produce material fragments [real tangible objects] (fig. 187).

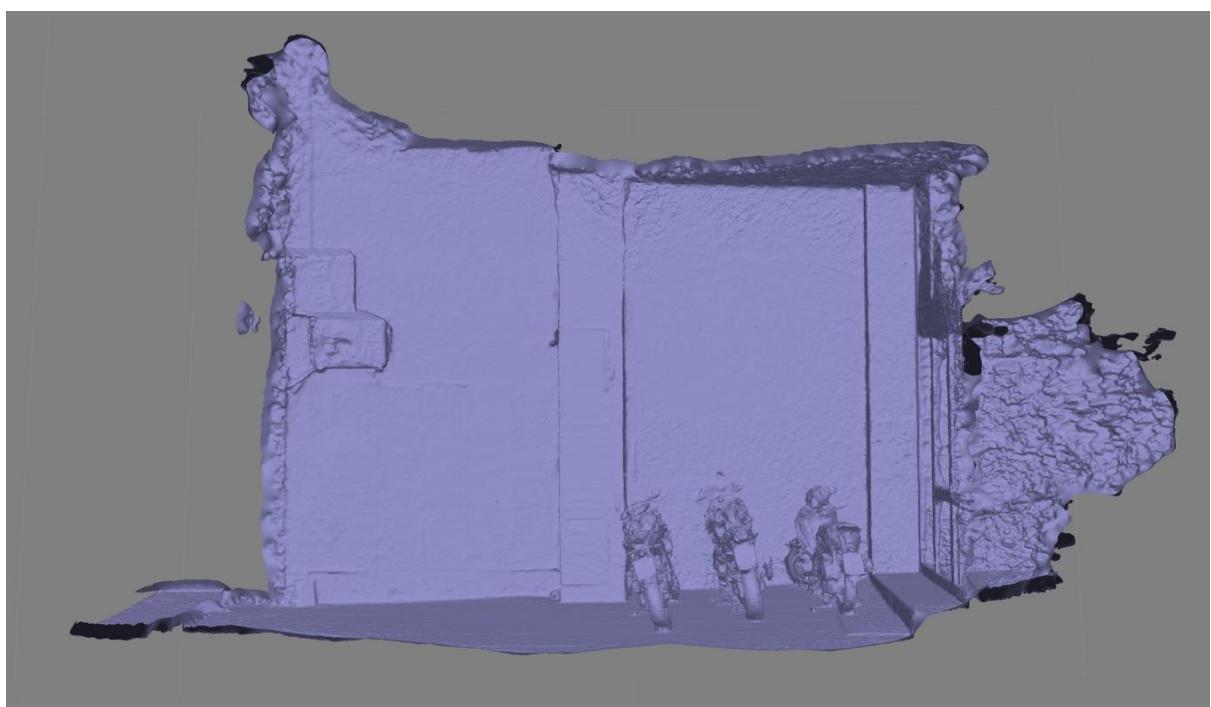


Figure 179 Panagiotis Ferentinos, The Mural Posters: 'Solid' option on Photoscan results in a unified fragment, 2019. Photogrammetry/3D model. Themistokleous 42, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

Appendix 1

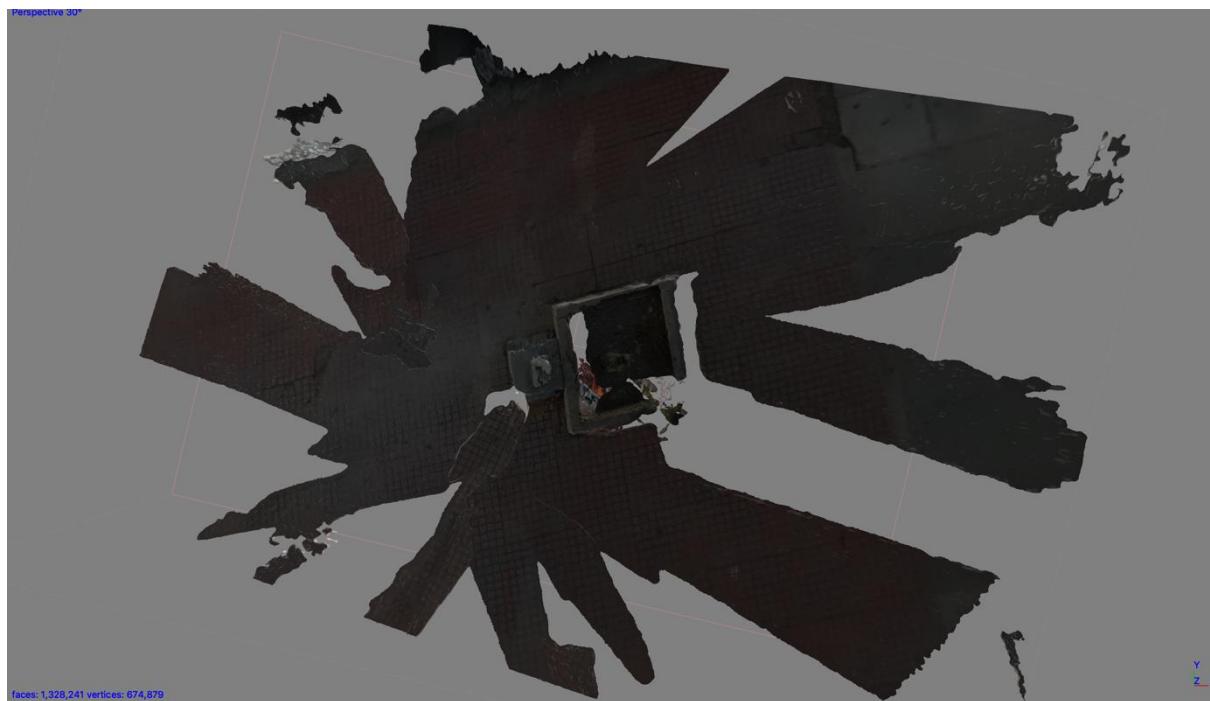


Figure 180 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Red post box as ruin*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Akadimias & Themistokleous, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

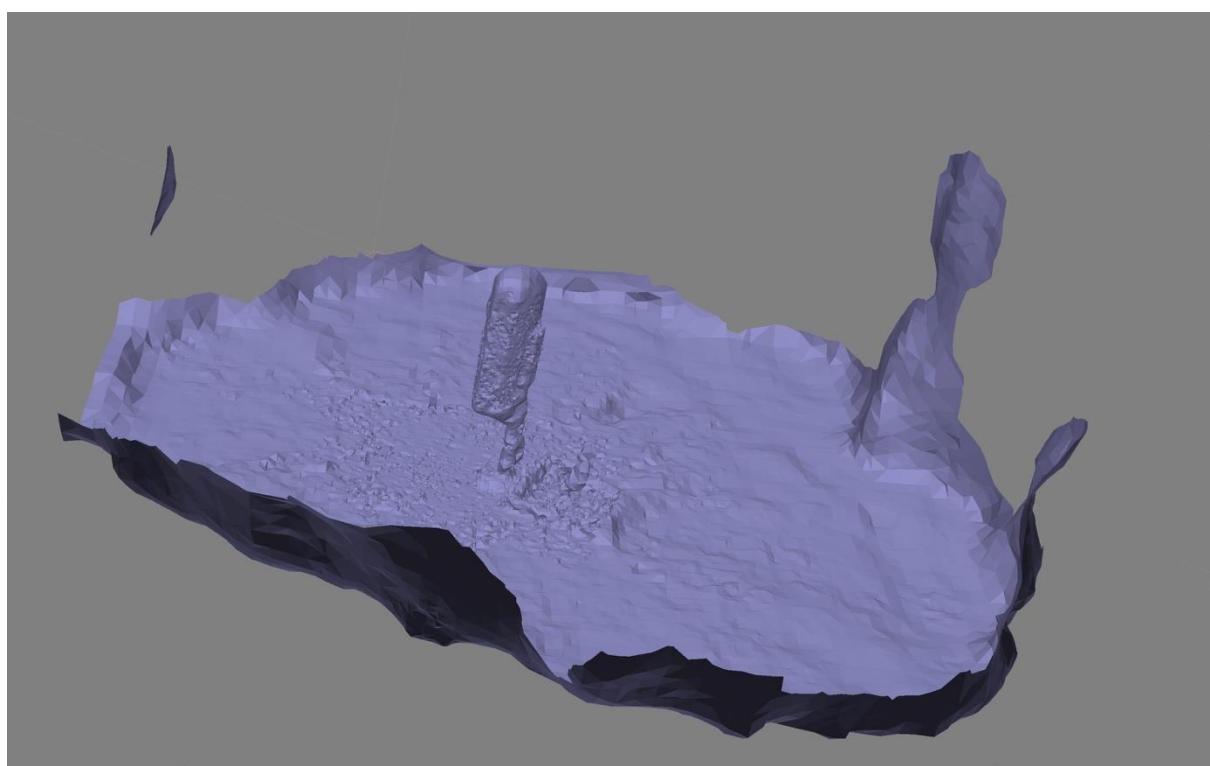


Figure 181 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Red post box as ruin*, 2019. Photogrammetry. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

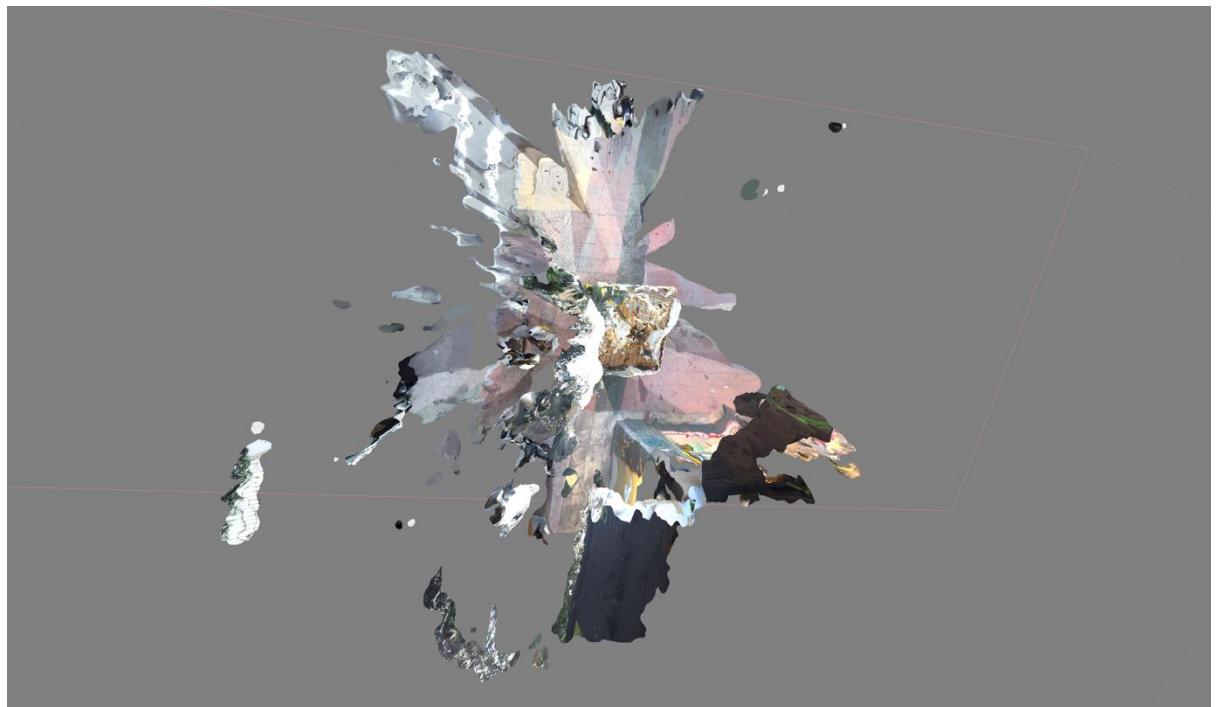


Figure 182 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Yellow Kiosk as ruin*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Akadimias 65, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

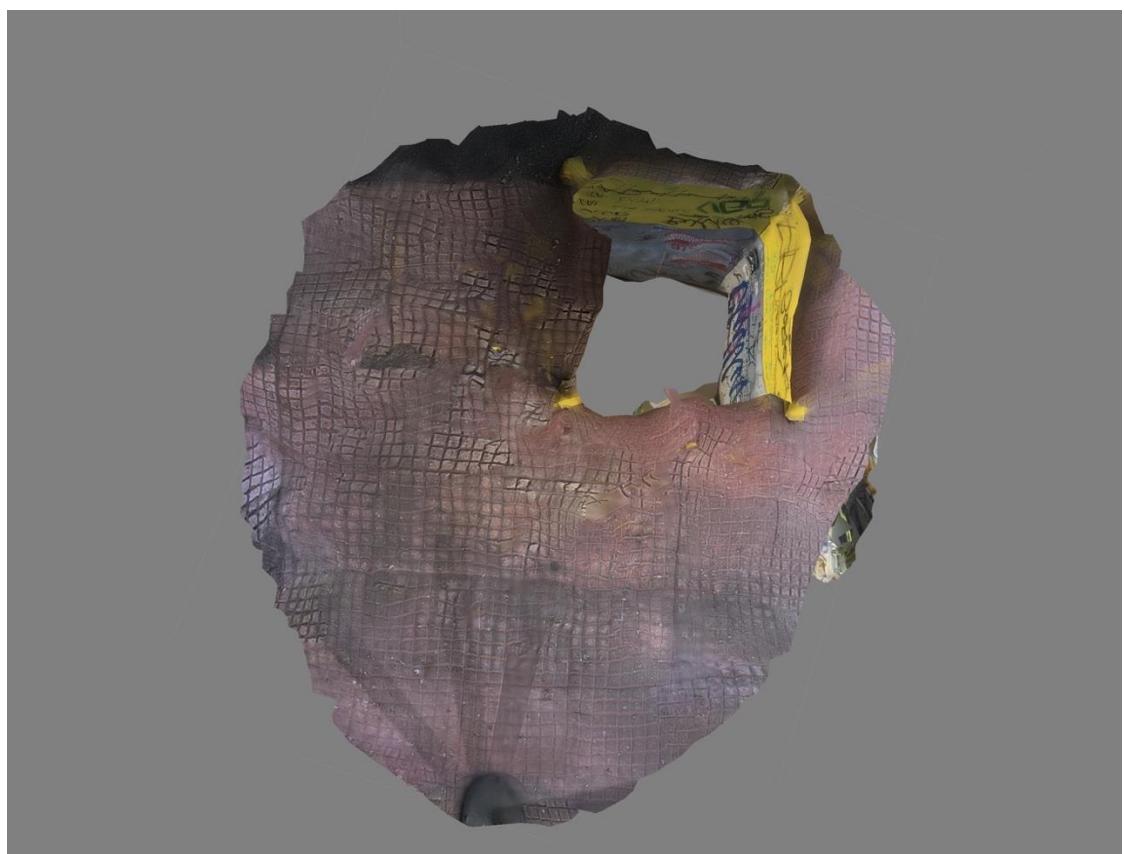


Figure 183 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Yellow Kiosk as ruin*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Akadimias 65, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

Appendix 1

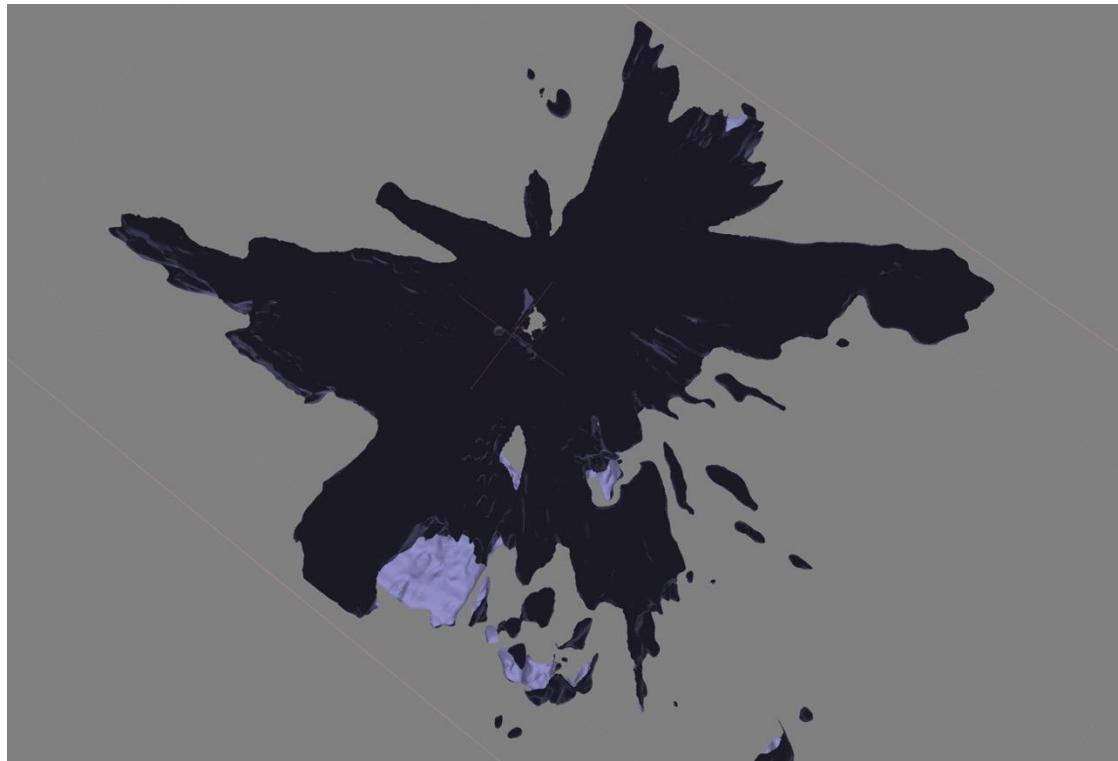


Figure 184 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *The Yellow Kiosk as ruin*, 2019. Photogrammetry. Akadimias 65, Athens, 10678. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 185 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Urban Fragments*, 2019. Photogrammetry printed on paper. 150 cm x 150 cm. The Winchester Gallery. © Dave Gibbons.



Figure 186 Panagiotis Ferentinos, producing skins in a given space, through collage compositions. 2019. Installation with printed photogrammetries. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

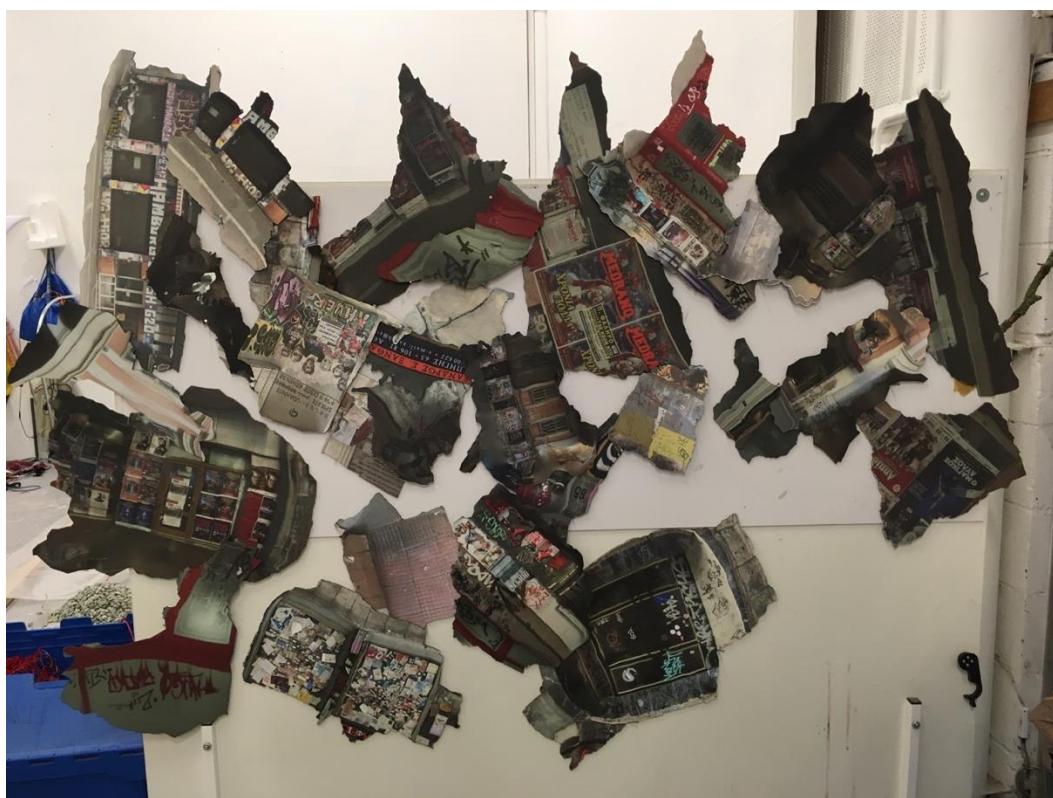


Figure 187 Panagiotis Ferentinos, Laser cut fragments from photogrammetry, used in collage compositions. 2020. Installation with printed photogrammetries. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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5) ‘Filopappos Hill’. Another way of wandering in Athens took place virtually, through the Instagram profile of the current mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyiannis. This decision was taken for two reasons. On the one hand, during the pandemic and due to lockdowns and their restrictions, I was unable to realise a real wandering in order to examine potential changes within the Athenian imagery. On the other, it was essential for my research to keep track of how the official authorities played upon the lockdowns to alter and intervene in the cityscape at will, as legal representatives of the people. Any urban alteration was justified and was subject to a cleaning strategy which is illustrated in detail in the final chapter of my thesis, Chapter 7, titled: ‘The ‘Clean City’ - Vanishing the Athenian trace: the de-mapping cleaning strategies’. The reason I have added this pin to my guided tour is that it connects the formerly examined cases, namely the ruins of the crisis, with antiquity stones located in Filopappos Hill. Current and past ruins are juxtaposed, as the first are subject to elimination by the official authorities, whereas the ancient ones are considered sacred and objects of cultural preservation.

The mayor’s post under discussion (fig. 188) was made on 16th September 2020 concerning the anti-graffiti cleaning of the archaeological site of Filopappou. The significance is powerful: up-to-the-minute traces, made from a contemporary material such as the spray-paint, accounted for ‘smudges’ and had to be removed from ancient limestones ‘with respect and extra attention to their preservation’ (Bakoyiannis, 2020f). The mayor’s statement can bring to mind McNeal’s viewpoint almost 30 years ago (1991) that Athens is a distinct example of a city where the importance of antiquity treasures is overemphasized to the disadvantage of other historical eras. (p. 49).

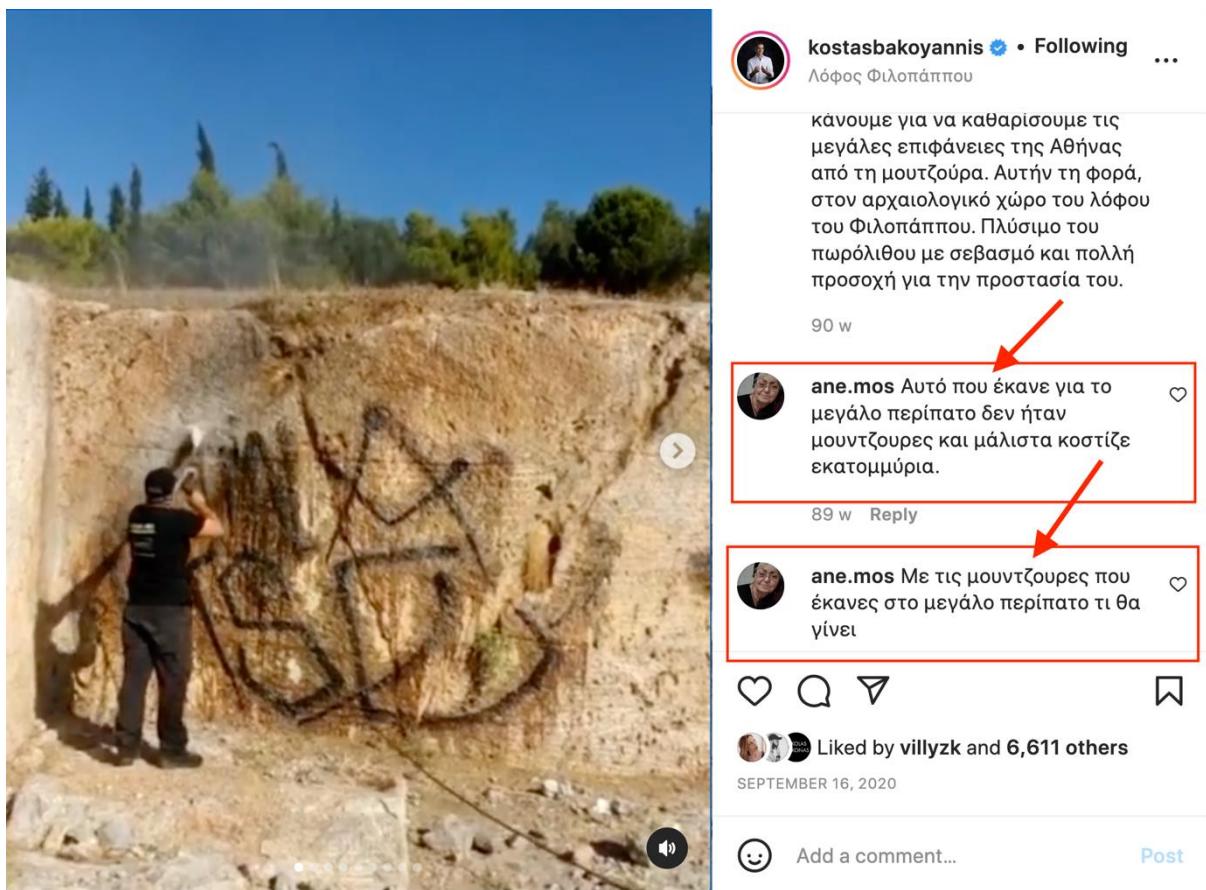


Figure 188 Unknown, Cleaning the limestones from the 'smudges', September 2020. Photography. Filopappos Hill. ©Kostas Bakoyiannis.

On the right side of the above image (fig. 188), two comments on the post implied the mayor's sovereignty over the city and the lack of restrictions to any intervention he decides for it. It indicates: 'What he [the mayor] did with the *Grand Promenade*, wasn't it smudges that cost millions? Mayor, what will happen with the smudges you made with the *Grand Promenade*?'. The *Grand Promenade* was a public intervention within the Athenian urban fabric, actualised by the current municipality. It cost millions of euros causing extra problems for the citizens, indeed intensifying traffic congestion. Detailed discussion as far as the *Grand Promenade* is concerned is available in the last chapter of the thesis, Chapter 7, in section 7.6., 'The Subversive Collage'. The comment is of pivotal importance as it stresses the supreme power of the current mayor over the city and the entailed authority of controlling and modifying it *ad libitum*.

6) 'The Closed Store in Mets area' (19, Vouliagmenis str.) and 7) 'The Shoe store "Anagnostopoulos". The next two cases are indicative of the Athenian landscape during the crisis. They display the phenomenon of mass store closures as an impact of the recession on

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commerce. Although the interior of the former stores remained empty and the stores themselves untenanted, their facades gradually played a new role in accommodating the skin of the crisis, through their visual appropriation. Both spots are in Vouliagmenis Avenue to which I devoted an extensive part of my thesis, in Chapter 4, 4.8., with two fieldworks, section 4.8.1. engaging with a night field research (first phase) that included 10 spots, and 4.8.2. engaging with a day field research (second phase) that included 19 spots. The case of ‘The Shoe Store “Anagnostopoulos”’ was encompassed in both fieldworks. The uploaded visuals in the map demonstrate the stepwise emergence of the skin from the moment that the store was shut down in 2009 and its façade’s gradual transformation through time: 2009, 2011, 2014, 2019. The case of ‘The Closed Store in Mets area’ has been discussed in Chapter 1, in section 1.5. Besides, as the visuals in the map’s pin indicate, the urban layering process of collaging and de-collaging qualities provided the impetus for printmaking, and in particular mural installations on a large scale via screen printing. This is the case of ‘The Hartley Library Mural installation’, described in Appendix 2.

8) The project ‘**The decline of the billboard**’ (Tripoleos & Ethnikis Antistaseos) placed in the last pin, is an indicative example of how sites such as billboards, advertising products of luxury, gradually declined during the crisis. The walls and hoardings of the spot bear witness to the history of the corner from 2009 to 2019. The forgotten visuals of the past act as an echo of prior forms of consumerism before, at the beginning, and throughout the crisis, until their decline and total disappearance. This case has been described in detail in Chapter 6, in section 6.5 ‘Décollage: restoring the ‘derma’ of anti-spectacle’.

Appendix 2 Printmaking

2.1 The skin as a driving force for print approaches

Another part of my practice comprises preliminary research experiments in printmaking. It can be seen in juxtaposition with ‘collage’ and ‘décollage’ concepts (especially Chapter 4) as printed equivalents of the virtual layering and palimpsest methods. These experiments demonstrate how other angles of my practice were infused with processes such as layering, palimpsesting, and skin-making and became part of my print approaches and collages. The handwritten, spray-painted slogans inscribed in the very body of the city led me to produce my own gestural alphabets on various plates. These plates were finally the foundations on which I built up my own layering printed compositions. Hence, the experience of observing and charting the coating transmutation of the city did not only remain within the borders of recording and producing an archive of visual documentation. But it also affected my analogue (‘traditional’) practices. Indeed, the layering ‘behaviour’ of the city has immersively influenced my printmaking, both over the technical process of making a plate and the printing process of developing the print. In this way, experiencing and further getting to know Athens in crisis and its skin became the leading reference for my printmaking methodology.

2.1.1 From etching to screen printing

Layering, as an approach, also incorporates how I shift from one print technique or process to another to activate raw material for further practice (e.g., collages). Etching requires a long-lasting process both in building up a plate and inking-printing it. To achieve faster and more massive raw material, I transferred my etchings onto silkscreens (fig. 190). I gained therefore a partial etching trace optic quality and the massiveness of printed material. My initial etched aluminium plates are displayed below (fig. 189). The layering process proceeded with the transfer of the aluminium plates’ prints to photocopies; then, the photocopies were transferred to acetate papers. The final print was in newsprint paper (fig. 190). This layering strategy implies both techniques and material approaches. My experimental approach to printmaking involved multiple printing, a mix of various techniques, and collaged forms based on palimpsests resulting from the print processes.

Appendix 2

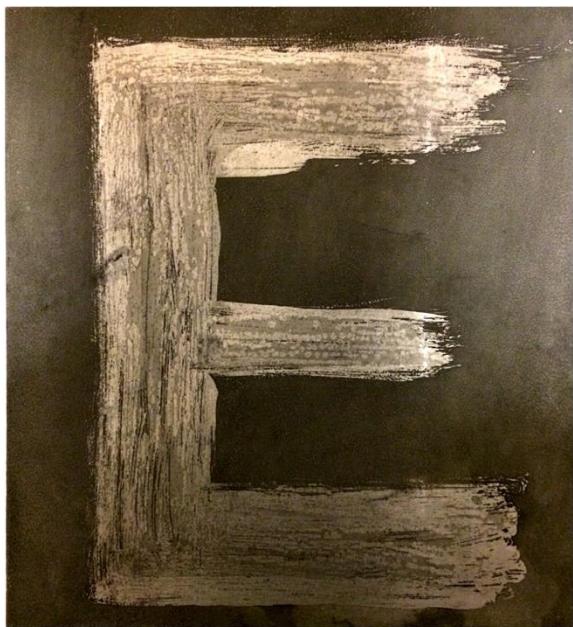


Figure 189 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Alphabets*, 2016. Etching on aluminium. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

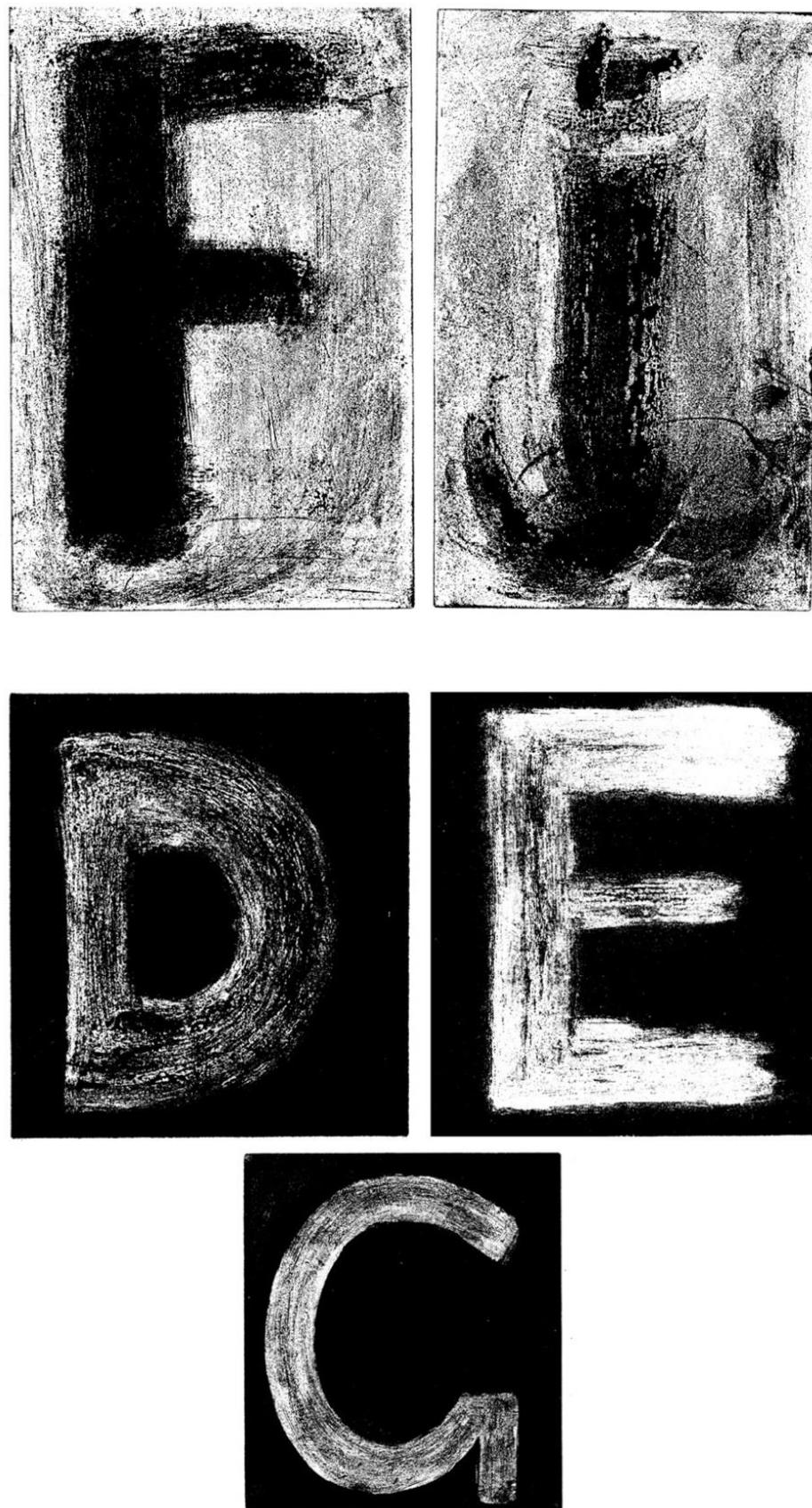


Figure 190 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Alphabets*, 2018-19. Etching prints are transferred into screen prints in newsprint paper. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

2.1.2 The Hartley Library mural installation

Relying on screen-printing and, in particular, the above-mentioned process of transferring etching prints and their qualities (e.g., texture) onto silk screens, I prepared mass printed material for a mural installation shown at an exhibition in the Hartley Library, University of Southampton (February–June 2019). While preparing the material for the mural, an essential component of the printing process was the act of multiple layering: an initial crimson red was gradually led into darker tones through multiple and successive printing (stages) and concluded to its final colour form after a palimpsest procedure of ink (fig. 191-192). The specific colour was a result of the gradual tones added to any formerly printed layer.

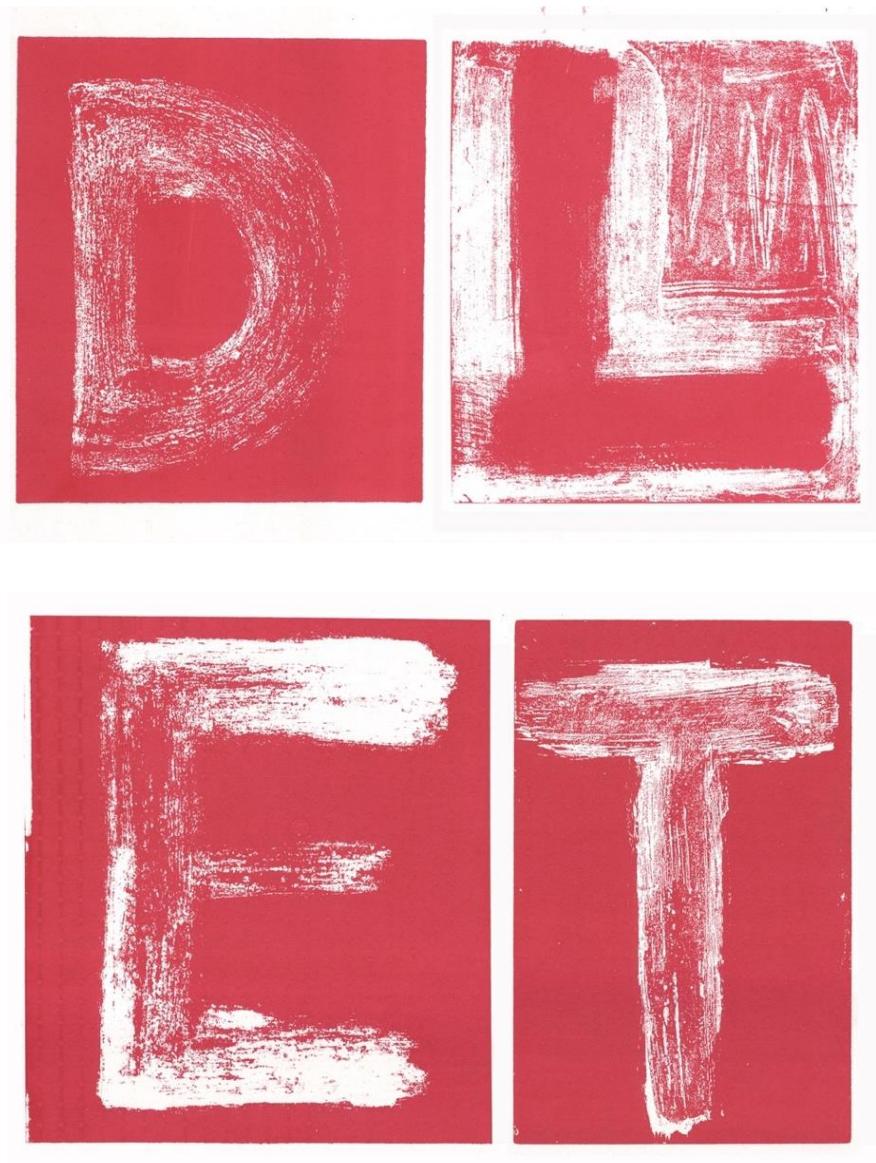


Figure 191 Panagiotis Ferentinos, First stage of the multiple layering printing processes, 2018-19.
Screen-printing. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 192 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Next stages, resulting in a palimpsest print*, 2018-19. Screenprinting. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

2.1.3 The collaged mural form

The *in situ* mural installation was exclusively composed in the given space (wall) on the 4th level of the Hartley Library. It was an enormous, collaged piece extended 2.5 metres (height) by 12 metres (length). The following images (fig. 193-197) show various sides of the installation.

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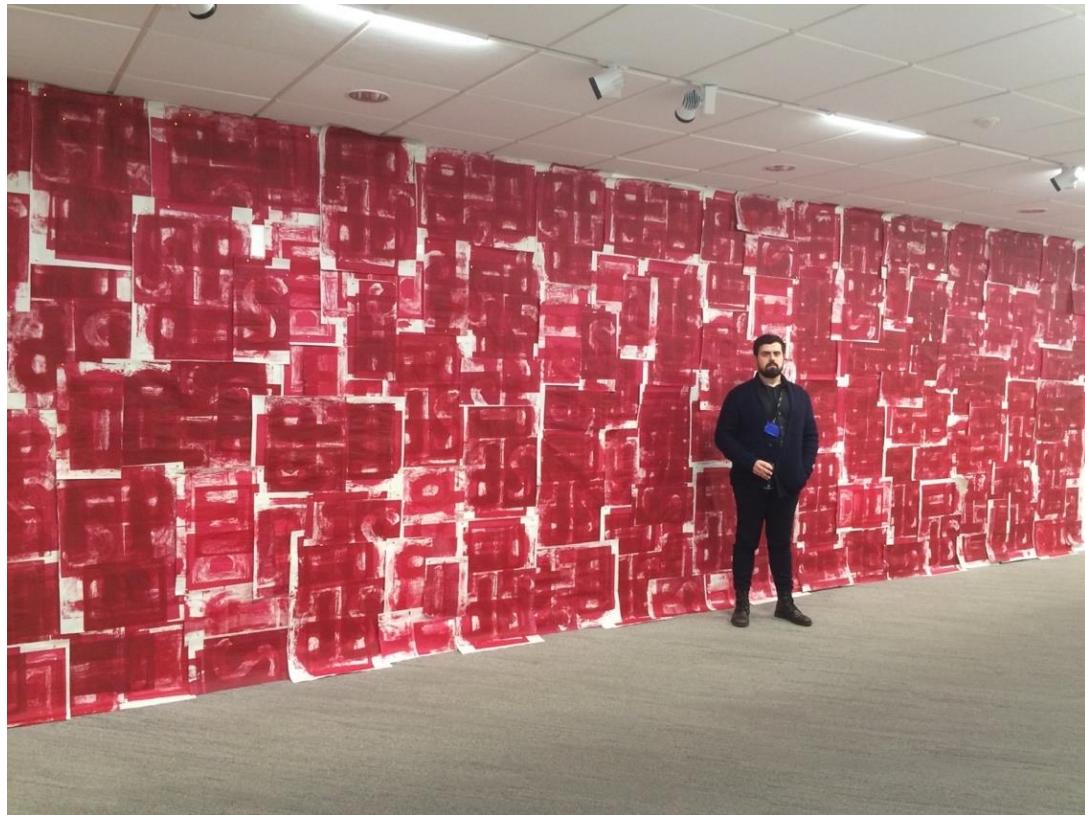


Figure 193 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *From the opening of the exhibition*, 2019. Installation. 2.5 m x 12 m. The Hartley Library, Southampton. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 194 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Various viewpoints of the installation*. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 195 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Various viewpoints of the installation*. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 196 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Various viewpoints of the installation*. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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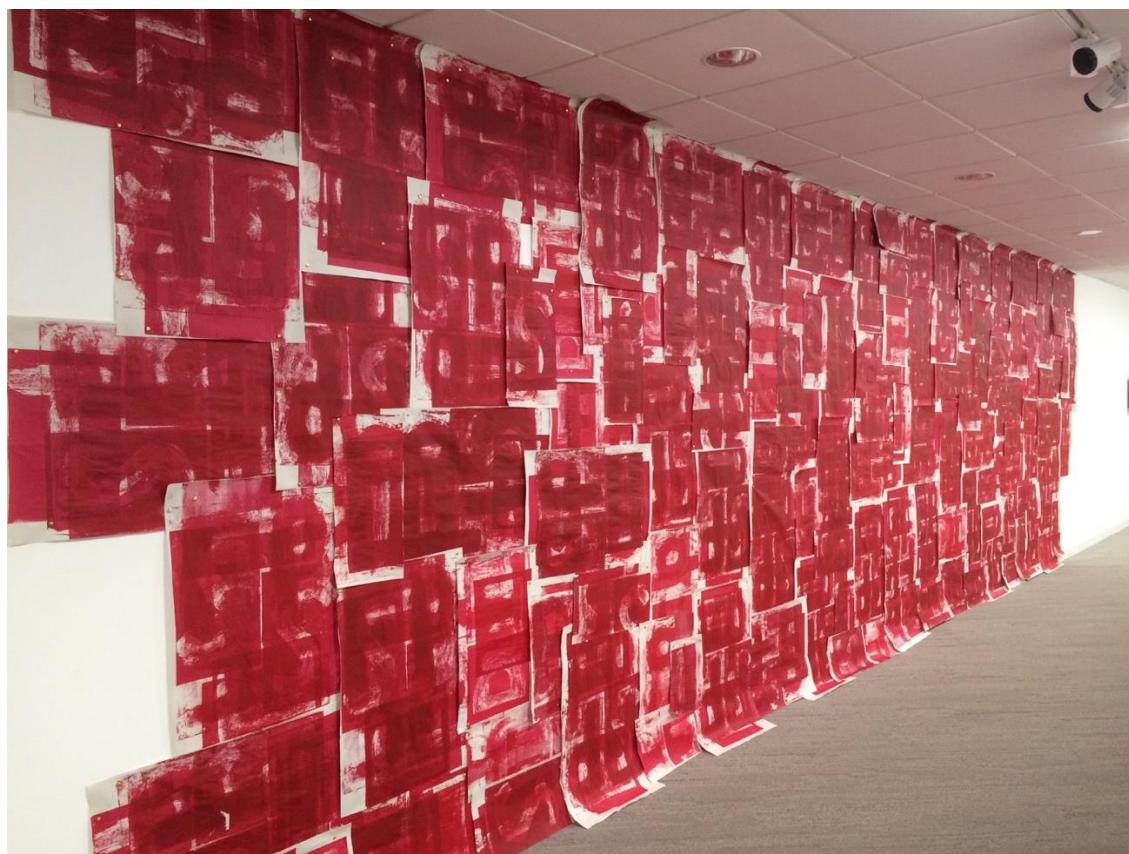


Figure 197 Panagiotis Ferentinos, *Various viewpoints of the installation*. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

The body of print in the Hartley Library built up a collaged composition of paper and colour matter, evoking the images of poster layers on the walls of Athens during the economic crisis. The experience of years of recording how the city evolves its skin on architectural surfaces became the guide for this layering approach in printmaking.

Let us remember the urban showcase of the closed store back in 2012 (Chapter 1: 1.5) and connect it with the red installation in the Hartley Library as far as the crisis layer is concerned. With regards to the showcase, the urban layering resulted from human intervention (such as tearing and partially ungluing the posters) or from wearing away due to weather conditions. The mural installation in the Hartley Library, although it addresses multiple layering—both in its making and installation—remains static. Protected in a library's concealed space, as the marbled pieces of antiquity showed behind display cases. No intervention from other people occurred or use of my material to alter it at will; no adding different information from various periods (such as the posters), shredding, or ungluing took place. In the end, the mural in the Hartley Library was created through a collage process. However, in various stages of my practice, the attempts to approach the skin of Athens and

its organic nature included décollaged tactics, destruction, and reconstruction of the produced (printed) material.

In 2019, several activities that took place at Winchester School of Art involved other people, both in making raw printed material through layering and utilising it at will. In the next section, I will refer to these activities and how my research was shared and intersected creatively with others. Thus, Athenian skin became known through fine art practices involving other individuals and their potential for image-making.

2.2 Sharing the layering experience and communicating Athens skin through practice-based workshops

My printmaking methods and essential components of my practice-based research, such as layering, screen printing, and collage, became part of my teaching experience through three workshops. They took place at Winchester School of Art and TATE Modern in early 2019. During those workshops, screen-printing activated massive, printed material that was utilised in further experimental explorations. Together with the participants, it was embodied in collages, various installations and sculptures, costumes, and indeed in some performative approaches and interactive projects as well. Hence, an initial layering experience through printing approaches became the main vehicle for the exchange of my practice, and the trajectory of individual expression by the participants.

2.2.1 Screen printing workshop with members of Winchester Trinity, Winchester School of Art

The first workshop took place at Winchester Gallery (WSA) in March 2019. In this workshop, participants included members of Winchester Trinity, undergraduate students, and postgraduate researchers from Winchester School of Art.

At the beginning of the workshop, I introduced the participants to how printmaking was adopted in my research in comparison to the imprints and urban layers found in the Athenian public sphere (fig. 198-199). Afterwards, we worked as a group on screen print practices, resulting in the production of a massive body of print as a raw material (fig. 200-201). Relying on this material, the participants proceeded to create experimental pieces, including the printing outcomes, and wasted material (fig. 202-203).

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Figure 198 Eria Nsubuga, 1st stage of the workshop: introduction to screen printing, 2019. Photography. Winchester School of Art. © Eria Nsubuga.



Figure 199 Eria Nsubuga, 1st stage of the workshop: gestural alphabets transferred onto acetate paper, 2019. Photography. Winchester School of Art. © Eria Nsubuga.



Figure 200 Eria Nsubuga, 2nd stage: the screen printing process, preparing the material for further experimentation, 2019. Photography. Winchester School of Art. © Eria Nsubuga.



Figure 201 Eria Nsubuga, 2nd stage: the first prints in a row of massive production of prints, 2019. Photography. Winchester School of Art. © Eria Nsubuga.

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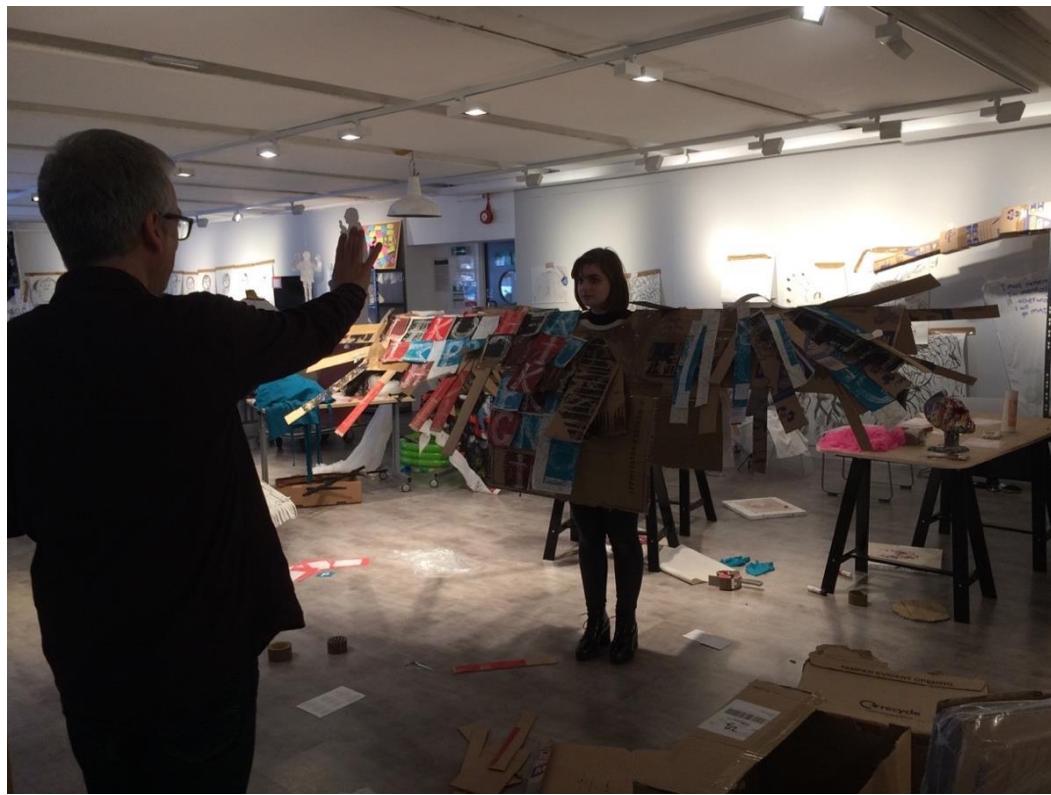


Figure 202 Panagiotis Ferentinos, 3rd stage: the prints were utilised in collage experimental works, 2019. Photography. The Winchester Gallery. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 203 Panagiotis Ferentinos, A collaged costume was produced from the prints and wasted material, 2019. Photography. The Winchester Gallery. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

2.2.2 Screen printing workshop and production of ephemeral experimental pieces. TATE Modern, April 2019

The second workshop took place in TATE Modern, London, while participating as a School in TATE Exchange Programmes. The workshop was held during a three-day show titled *Itinerant Objects* in Level 5, Blavatnik Building, April 5-7, 2019. The participants were the same as in the first project. The produced pieces from the former workshop—objects and costumes—served as spontaneous and experimental performative activities on the different levels of TATE Modern (fig. 206-209). Once the performances were completed, the pieces and objects returned to Level 5 and were utilised in a second phase of an experimental exhibition open to the public (fig. 204-205).

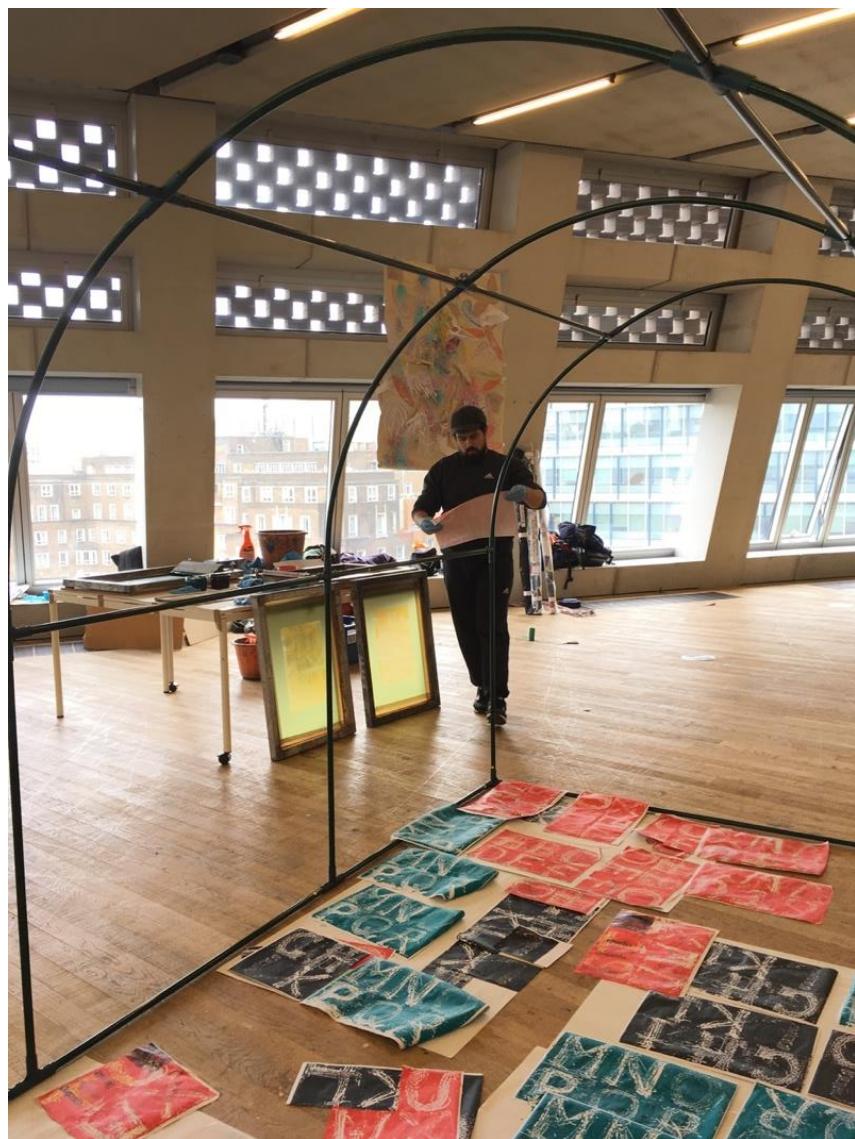


Figure 204 Dave Gibbons, Screen printed outcomes as part of a ground installation before being further used, 2019. Photography. Tate Modern, London. ©David Gibbons.

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Figure 205 Dave Gibbons, the collaged costumes from the prior workshop used as experimental sculptures, 2019. Photography. Tate Modern, London. ©David Gibbons.



Figure 206 Peter North, The collaged costumes as part of a performance on the different levels of Tate Modern, 2019. Photography. Tate Modern, London. ©Peter North.



Figure 207 Peter North, *During a performative procession*, 2019. Photography. Tate Modern, London. ©Peter North.



Figure 208 Peter North, *Performers and visitors of Tate Modern in interaction*, 2019. Photography. Tate Modern, London. ©Peter North.



Figure 209 Peter North, *During a performative procession*, 2019. Photography. Tate Modern, London. ©Peter North.

2.2.3 Doctoral College: Annual Festival: Slogans and Collages

In May 2019, I was selected to participate in the *Annual Doctoral Festival* at the University of Southampton as a representative researcher of Winchester School of Art through a funded project by the Doctoral College. I had the opportunity to share part of my research and work with it with the participants. The participants were postgraduate students of various disciplines at the University of Southampton with no prior experience in art practices. During the same period (end of May 2019), I showed my first-year research work in a solo exhibition at the Winchester Gallery as well.

The workshop started with a brief introduction to printmaking and how it is adopted in my research. During the introduction, I showed photographic material from my field research in Athens, including the slogans and handwritten traces accommodated on the city's surfaces (fig. 210). That is, how urban imagery was influential in my research; how language, letters, and alphabets became part of my practice; and what their role was. During a live screen-printing performance, the participants co-worked and developed the material that would be used for the making of their collages with prints (fig. 211-213). Based on this printed material, the participants worked at will: by initially collecting the letters they wanted, they proceeded to the formulation of their verbal collages (their motto) or more abstractive approaches evoking the iconography of the walls of Athens.



Figure 210 Ngo P.L.H., Workshop: Doctoral College Annual Festival, 2019. Photography. The Winchester Gallery. ©Ngo P.L.H.



Figure 211 Panagiotis Ferentinos, During the workshop: collage making, 2019. Photography. The Winchester Gallery. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.

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Figure 212 Panagiotis Ferentinos, During the workshop: collage making, 2019. Photography. The Winchester Gallery. ©Panagiotis Ferentinos.



Figure 213 Ngo P.L.H., With some of the participants and their collages, 2019. Photography. The Winchester Gallery. ©Ngo P.L.H.

2.3 Conclusions from the workshops

Through the three activities (workshops), my research was able to be exchanged with members of the community (Winchester Trinity), students at an art school (Winchester School of Art, from undergraduates to doctoral researchers), and doctoral students from a wide range of disciplines at the University of Southampton. Therefore, people from different backgrounds, with or without prior art skills, benefited from and contributed in turn to a creative process as a group, a community.

An initial introduction made known the conditions of the urban space of Athens during the crisis and focused on how this field could become the core of practice-based research through diverse practices and methodologies. Various ideas were approached, both theoretically (discussion) and practically (making), to unveil the richness of the discussed cityscape as far as its materiality and significance are concerned. Those were concepts such as the trace, the imprint, the verbal and non-verbal, collaging and tearing apart, wasted material, etc., connected to the physical procedures of the cityscape and how they can be utilised as practice-based methods as well.

In the first two workshops, all the participants became part of the whole, contributing to a widely collaborative activity that was finally communicated with a greater public (in the case of Tate Modern). Within the Athenian landscape, although each agent (either an individual or their outcome) acts individually, in most cases, the resulting intervention feeds into the skin and shapes and reshapes the bigger image shared by all. In the third workshop (Doctoral College: Annual Festival), even though the participants produced their verbal collages (a motto), their messages were finally seen and communicated by the others at will, based on their reception. It occurs in the cityscape with the slogans offered by their writer to any passer-by.

Thereby, concepts and practice were shared, which allowed me to receive valuable feedback on how others handled my techniques and their outcomes. Through the practice, both sides (participants and researcher) went beyond a mere presentation of the subject in lecture form and further discussion and managed to communicate through creative processes via visuals, image making, experimentation, and performativity.

Appendix 2

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