



**Nicosia - Layers of Absence and Presence**  
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**Artists at the H4C - tales | rumours | frictions | reflections**  
 6-9 May 2011 Home for Cooperation - Buffer Zone, Nicosia

In 2009 I began to explore Nicosia's walled city; walking every street of this complex composition and mapping – based on my observations – the uses and conditions of the buildings and spaces contained there. A series of maps resulted from these observations. These maps marked which sites in the old city were commercial or residential, the location of workshops located in old buildings, public buildings like schools or churches, parking lots, green spaces (of which there were few), empty lots or unoccupied dilapidated buildings, and the sites used by the militaries.

Copies of this map on pieces of board were then treated as layers of presence and absence. I started to cut out, on each successive layer, the places that, from my point of view, were sites in the city that were the strongest absences. The first part of the city to be removed in this way was the *Buffer Zone*, an area that has been inaccessible since 1974. I had marked out on my maps where exactly all the barricades were located, and cut out the part of the city that lies within these demarcations. Therefore the area that I have cut out includes the areas that are controlled by the United Nations, the Turkish Army, and the Greek Cypriot forces.

I then moved through the successive layers of the now three-dimensional map, cutting out military areas, empty sites, obscure neighborhoods of dilapidated housing, workshops, other residential areas, and finally public buildings that are better used. The layers of the map progress until all that is left are the areas of the city that are most widely used, and of course the city walls, whose form is always used to imagine the city.

It becomes clear from looking at the final map, when all the layers are compiled together, that the part of the city that was cut out first – the Buffer Zone – has, by its absence, a very strong presence in the city, and plays a large part in defining this form. Maps from my research on this part of the city, as well as associated photographs and narratives, will be exhibited in this space at the Home for Cooperation in 2012.