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Flora Nostra: Using Art to Map the Flora Around Us

Open-Access Educational Programmes
for Formal and Non-Formal Education



ΧΑΡΟΚΟΠΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY



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Educational Book

Flora Nostra: Using Art to Map the Flora Around Us

The open-access educational tools for formal and non-formal education are part of the research project “Economy, environment, and landscape in the Cypriot *longue durée*: a combined analysis using historical data and modern Geoinformatics applications”. The project was developed by the Department of Geography of Harokopio University and funded by the Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation (2019-2023).

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The Research Project

The research project “Economy, environment, and landscape in the Cypriot *longue durée*: a combined analysis using historical data and modern Geoinformatics applications” was developed by the Department of Geography of Harokopio University, funded by the Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation, and supervised by Christos Chalkias (Professor, Harokopio University) and Antonis Hadjikyriacou (Assistant Professor, Panteion University).

The project examines the relationship between the economy, the environment, and the landscape of Cyprus from the 16th to the 20th century through the analysis of two different types of sources: tax/land surveys and historical (old) maps. The surveys provide information on population, economic production, place names and land use. Cartographic representations provide valuable data on the environment, the rural and urban landscape, the hydrography, and the geography as documented at a particular moment in time. The research project was based on the following sources:

- the first Ottoman fiscal survey of the year 1572
- the 1832/33 Ottoman Property Survey of Cyprus
- the Kitchener map (1878-1883), which is the first modern and cartographically accurate representation of the island, along with the detailed plans for Nicosia and Limassol towns, as well as
- the British Agricultural Census of 1931

By combining the two types of sources using modern Geoinformatics methods, the project processes and analyses historical data to visualise the economy, environment, and landscape of Cyprus on the one hand, and on the other hand to follow their evolution over a period of about five centuries. All the research outcomes of the project can be accessed via this link: <https://ecoland.hua.gr/en/>

An equally important objective is to provide the public with free access to the outcomes, which may be achieved by disseminating them as extensively as possible beyond the research/university community. Two types of tools have been produced for this purpose:

a) Digital applications for smart mobile devices and a web application, that provide the opportunity for interactive use by the public: <https://ecoland.hua.gr/en/outcomes/mobile>



b) Educational books, containing educational activities which incorporate the aforementioned digital applications:

- *Flora Nostra: Using Art to Map the Flora Around Us*
- *The River Speaks: The Pedaios River in Space and Time*

Rationale and Objectives of the Educational Programmes

The proposed educational programmes are based on the idea that one of the ways educational practices become truly innovative is by linking them to original and pioneering research.

The programmes are aimed at children and young people in two age groups (10-14 and 15-20), with potential application in formal education (primary, secondary, and higher), as well as in non-formal education. The proposed methodology can be adapted to address other age groups, other regions, or non-formal education structures, such as summer schools, museums, and cultural organisation programmes.

The objectives of the educational programmes are:

- to link historical and geographical research with the visual arts
- to develop research skills in the visual arts
- to integrate new technologies in visual arts research and production
- to create new access points to the cultural history of Cyprus using experiential practices, technological and visual tools

Despo Pasia, Museologist - Museum Educator
Evanthia (Evi) Tselika, Art Historian

The educational programme *Flora Nostra: Using Art to Map the Flora Around Us* is divided into two parts:

The first focuses on edible plants inside and around our home gardens and is aimed at ages 10-14 (Educational Programme 1). Edible plants are usually grown as dedicated crops. However, there are also many edible plants in gardens and open spaces in towns and villages, whose presence is often overlooked. Educational Programme 1 focuses on these plants, their presence around us, their uses, and their visual representation.

The second focuses on palm trees, a characteristic tree that appears repeatedly on Kitchener's map of Cyprus as well as on the detailed plans of the towns of Nicosia and Limassol. It is aimed at young people aged 15-20 years (Educational Programme 2). Palm trees are a dominant species in the Cypriot landscape. They are the only trees included as a special symbol on Kitchener's maps and serve as a reference point in the visible urban and rural landscape. Educational Programme 2 includes a series of workshops on contemporary visual mapping of the late 19th century, using palm trees as a case study. To implement the programme, the specific symbol for palm trees can be replaced with another element from the Kitchener map that is related to the natural environment and to the geographic region of interest.

Overall, the *Flora Nostra* educational programme is based on a flexible methodology that can be applied in both urban and rural areas of Cyprus. It can also be adapted for use in areas outside Cyprus, either by including historical maps of each corresponding region or by using modern data on crops and the production of edible plants.

Methodology

Visual Mapping and Participative Artistic Creation

This educational book focuses on visual mapping methods. Since the 1970s, within the context of contemporary art, visual artists worldwide have engaged with visual map-making and the application of mapping methodologies.

Methodologically, it is based on the structure of an interdisciplinary research project that explores the relationship between history, environment, and landscape in Cyprus from the 16th to the 20th century through the analysis of censuses and historical maps, but it also extends the discussion to the fields of visual arts and education. Familiarity with the everyday use of digital maps and the virtual representation of geographical space through applications such as OpenStreetMap or Google Maps has reshaped our relationship with maps and mapping methods.

From the late decades of the 20th century to the present, contemporary art has made systematic use of maps and mapping as a methodology (Casey 2005, Harmon 2009, Watson 2009). During the same period, the growth of the map as a visual medium and mapping as a visual methodology has unfolded alongside a participatory or relational turn in contemporary art (Bishop 2012, Finkelpearl 2013, Leeson 2017) that emphasizes collective creation and active engagement. The participatory processes observed in contemporary art practices that engage with maps and mapping are central to the methodology of the two proposed educational programs.

Combining Visual Arts with Environmental Education

Environmental art has been presented as a visual methodology since the 1960s and is a manifestation of the environmental movement. It focuses on environmental problems and is linked to Land Art, a movement in which artists work with nature as the primary material and accept that natural changes become an organic element of the work, since it is shaped by nature itself. Land Art is thus understood as a visual methodology that uses soil, plants, water, and light as materials, and in which the artists' actions take place in natural spaces, thereby rethinking the human-nature relationship (Kastner and Wallis 1998). Today, in the

context of the broader ecological movement, environmental art is associated with the style and conceptual approach of Land Art, which actively aims to raise awareness of environmental issues, nature and ecological consciousness.

Artistic movements that preceded environmental art and have inspired it in various ways include landscape painting, landscape photography, and botanical illustration (Buck and Rice).

Connecting Visual Arts with New Technologies

Digital imagery permeates almost every aspect of contemporary life through a plethora of devices found in our homes, in the streets, in places of entertainment and work, and, increasingly, in our pockets. In this new context of communication and aesthetics, the digital image has become an integral part of daily experience for most people. The sheer volume and unprecedented frequency of digital images make it necessary, perhaps more than ever, to understand the culture of the image itself and, more specifically, the digital image.

The audio, text, and image-processing options (static or animated) provided by computers, mobile phones, tablets, and other devices have embedded them in our everyday lives. The revolution that has taken place in the visual arts through photography and moving images is directly related to the uses of digital technologies and the complete redefinition of the understanding and use of the image in today's world. This redefinition is not static, but constantly evolving and acquiring new implications with the development of virtual reality. Consequently, questions concerning the use of technology today have become central points of reference for both the present and the future of the visual arts.

The educational programmes proposed in the next two chapters focus on the use of new technologies through the digital research tools developed within the framework of the research project “Economy, environment, and landscape in Cypriot *longue durée*”.

Educational Programme 1

for children and young people (10-14 years old)
with potential application in formal primary and secondary education
and non-formal education

1.1. Framework of the Pilot Implementation

The educational programme was implemented with 6th graders at the 3rd Primary School of Palouriotissa in Nicosia (2017-2018), which is equipped with a visual arts workshop. Each class consisted of approximately 20 children aged 11-12, and each session ran for 80 minutes.

1.2. Materials and Equipment

a. Digital media

- Smart mobile devices (phones or tablets)
- USB sticks (if available to the members of the group)
- Free QR code generator/creator and QR code reader (if not already available on the smart mobile devices)
- Internet access
- PCs (1 for every 3-4 people)

b. Prints and/or digital images

- Kitchener map prints (in colour)
- QR code prints (black and white)
- Selected photo prints produced by the group (in colour)
- Images of plants identified in the web application that are not thriving during the implementation of the project
- Image samples with botanical illustrations

c. Art materials and media

- Soft pastels
- Fine-tip pens and markers
- Brushes
- Pencils, erasers
- Scissors
- Acrylic paints

- Opaque paper or cloth bags that can be sealed
- Plant samples found in the study area
- Magnifying glasses
- A3 paper for pastels
- A3 paper for pencil
- Sketchbooks
- Post-it notes
- Whiteboard

1.3. Sessions – Working Plan

1.3.1. Preparation Session

Materials and equipment:

- Smart mobile devices (phones or tablets)
- Internet access
- Sketchbooks

This session is dedicated to the following:

- Presentation of and familiarisation with free digital applications for creating QR codes
- Familiarisation with the functions of the camera on smart mobile devices that will be used during the project

Using QR Codes

QR codes (Quick Response codes) are two-dimensional codes that can store words or web links, and which can be read easily and quickly by smart mobile devices. There are many free applications available on the Web that can generate QR codes (usually found as QR code generators/creators).

Their use is straightforward:

- We insert the information we want to store (this can be some text or a web link)
- We press the generate/create button
- The image of the code is then generated
- We save it and we can then print it

To read a QR code, most smart mobile camera apps today have a built-in code scanning function. If this is not an option, we need to download a free scanning app (QR code reader). For this project, it is recommended to use apps that also work offline, e.g. i-nigma.

Notes:

- Group leaders should become quite familiar with the necessary functions before group meetings.
- It is preferable for group members to write their text on a piece of paper first so that the syntax and content can be finalised before it can be QR-encoded.
- At this initial stage it is worth discussing with the group about the form that such a short text might take. It can be:
 - something humorous
 - a riddle
 - a Haiku or a Limerick (if the group is already familiar with these forms)
 - a website discovered by the group, regarding the edible plants or herbs of Cyprus
 - or alternatively, adopt some other idea generated by the group

Using a Smart Mobile Device Camera for Photography and Video

In the project we use the following functions:

- Focus adjustment
- Brightness adjustment
- Sensitivity adjustment (ISO): usually found in the Pro menu and adjusts the camera's sensitivity. The higher the ISO, the more photosensitive the camera becomes, something that helps in low-light photography.
- Panorama: creates panoramic images up to 360°, either horizontally or vertically. Keep the camera steady and keep panning in one direction.

The group members can experiment:

- with outdoor photography under shade and sunlight (adjusting brightness and ISO settings)
- with at least three types of focus: object detail, the entire object, the object in its surroundings (brightness and focus setting adjustment)

The group should discuss ethical ways of taking photographs:

- we do not include people in our photographs unless we have their written permission
- If we approach some location for a photo shoot:
 - we do so respectfully and discreetly
 - if the owners are present, we should explain the purpose of our photo shoot
 - ask for their permission

1.3.2. Session 1: Exploring the Concept of “Nature”

Materials and equipment:

- Whiteboard
- Sketchbooks
- For each group: A3 paper, post-it notes, markers, coloured pencils, fine-tip pens
- Smart mobile devices (phones or tablets)

Activity 1

- a. We start our investigation with the question

What is Nature?

We encourage exploration of the question beyond any obvious answers, with additional questions such as

Where do you encounter Nature?

This question is particularly useful, as it reveals even more perceptions among group members about what Nature is. In our discussion, we include both views that regard Nature as only that which arises without human intervention, and views that regard Nature as the result of human activity. Thus, we can find Nature in the countryside, but also in populated areas in various forms.

What does it include?

In this section also include all answers:

- e.g. self-growing plants (native), animals living in the wild, in the sky, under the sea, in the rivers, etc.
- e.g. planting, cultivations, breeding, water management, etc.

- b. Create a spider chart on which to record all the answers. Children make their own in their notebooks or sketchbooks (A4 size or larger is recommended), focusing on the answers that interest them. If the spider chart can remain on display or be created electronically, it can be easily reformatted during the project.

c. We focus on the area surrounding the school or place where we are working (the study area). We look for elements that we do not usually notice, such as edible plants:

*Have you noticed that we eat or use some of the plants
we cultivate
or that grow naturally in our area?*

Activity 2

a. The children are divided into groups.

Each group is provided with some A3 paper, post-it notes, markers, coloured pencils and fine-tip pens.

The group holds a discussion, and on each post-it note they list a local plant, either wild or cultivated, that they know people use as a food, herb or spice.

b. The group decides how to present this brainstorming on A3 paper, for example as a spider chart, simple diagram or in another shape or form (such as a tree, animal, human or building). Diagrams are created with simple drawings within the time available and include all of the group's post-it notes. If possible, they are displayed in the workspace or made available as a reference when needed.

c. We pose questions that will be answered later in the educational programme:

*If we were in the same area 200 or more years ago,
would we have encountered the same plants?
Would some of them have been different?
Which ones do you think were around 200, 300 years ago?*

Activity 3

QR codes are created for the topics we dealt with in the 1st Session.

1.3.3. Session 2: Inventory of Edible Plants in the Study Area

Materials and equipment:

- Smart mobile devices (phones or tablets)

Activity 1

Most of the session is devoted to an on-site study, recording and photographing of the area's edible plants and herbs. We remind the group about the ethics of taking photographs.

Notes:

- Prior to the session, group leaders study the area on site and identify where wild and cultivated edibles are found.
- It might be more effective to divide the group into smaller groups working at the same time.
- It is advisable to stop at locations that we have identified as being of interest and allow the group to observe and identify the plants.
- Provide as much information as possible about the plants on the spot: usage, history, etc.

Activity 2

We create QR codes for the topics we discussed in the 2nd session.

1.3.4. Session 3: Visual Representation of Edible Plants

Materials and equipment:

- Opaque paper or cloth bags that can be sealed
- Samples of plants identified by the group during the previous session, collected by the group leaders shortly before the meeting to keep them fresh
- Soft pastels
- Botanical illustration images
- Magnifying glasses
- A3 paper for pastels

a. The group is divided into smaller subgroups. On each work surface, we place sealed bags containing plant samples identified by the group during the previous meeting. We inform the group about the contents.

Group members are asked to touch and smell the bags without opening them, and then guess which plant sample is in each one.

b. The bags are exchanged among group members and any difficulties in identifying the plants are discussed. Leaders may help by providing information on the uses of the plants (as an infusion, a spice, food, etc.).

c. Open the bags and place the samples on the work surface. The group observes them in detail using magnifying glasses to answer the question:

Which parts are present in each plant?

(refer to science lessons if applicable)

Which ones can we draw?

d. The group becomes familiar with the use of soft pastels: drawing, rubbing, blending. We pay special attention to hand placement so that the heel of the palm does not rub against and smudge our drawings.

e. Each member selects one of the samples and, using a magnifying glass, works with the soft pastels. Scale can be left open or agreed upon in advance (figs 1 and 2).



Figs 1 and 2. Visual representation of the plants collected by the groups during the pilot implementation of the project, with students from the 3rd Primary School of Palouriotissa (Nicosia).
© Photo: Despo Pasia

1.3.5. Session 4: Using the Website “Economy, environment, and landscape in the Cypriot *longue durée*”

Materials and equipment:

- PCs (1 for every 3-4 people)
- Internet access
- Sketchbooks or notebooks
- Whiteboard

Activity 1

a. We start our exploration with questions that were left unanswered at the end of the 1st session:

*If we were at the same spot 200 or more years ago,
would we have encountered the same plants?
Would some of them have been different?
Which ones do you think were present 200, 300 years ago?*

b. After listening to the group’s ideas, we look into sources:

Where could we look for information on the topic?

c. The group discusses various possible sources that could be used. If maps are not mentioned, we introduce them into the discussion.

d. We visit the link <https://ecoland.hua.gr/en/>, which includes the results of the broader research project “Economy, environment, and landscape in the Cypriot *longue durée*”.

We click on “Thematic Maps” and invite the group to examine the data shown on the left of the screen, drawn from the 1572 Ottoman fiscal survey. Each item is presented with nine different maps (fig. 3).

We guide the group to ensure they only use the maps that appear at the largest size on our screen and are always titled “Proportional Symbols”. By clicking on the map, a larger version is displayed. In our example, we see data on wheat: the larger the dots, the greater the quantity of the product recorded in the fiscal survey.

Which of these figures give us information about edible plants?

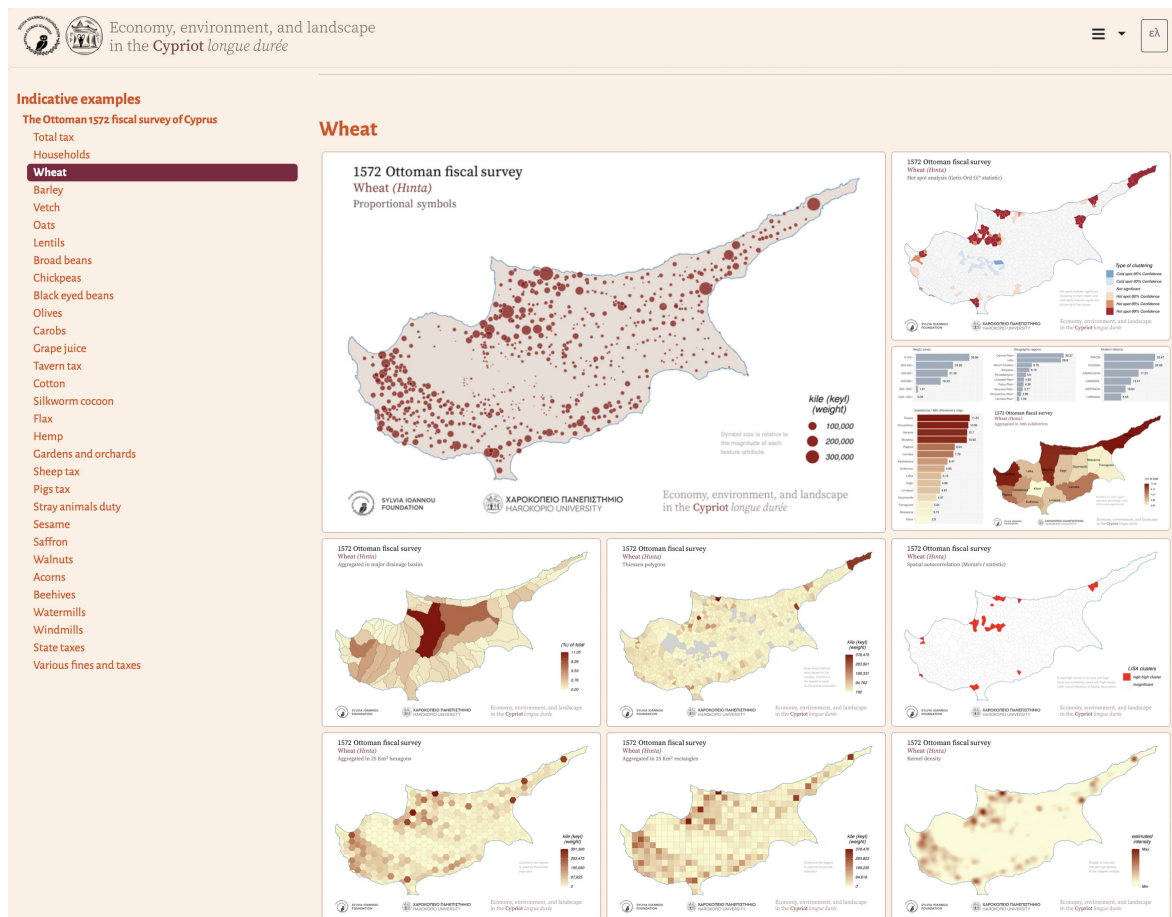


Fig. 3. Example of 9 maps depicting data from the 1572 Ottoman fiscal survey regarding wheat. © Harokopio University and Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation

e. We focus on the selected study area and ask the group to list all the edible plants they identify from the website.

Besides the plants themselves, what other information might we be interested in?

Activity 2

The group is split into pairs or groups of 3-4 people, depending on the number of PCs available.

a. We visit the web application “The first triangulated survey of Cyprus by Kitchener (1878-1883)”, via the link: <https://kitchener.hua.gr/en>

Together with the group, we briefly explore the list of map data for Cyprus on the left side of the screen. We encourage them to expand the layers to reveal the subcategories that contain the information we are looking for (figs 4 and 5).

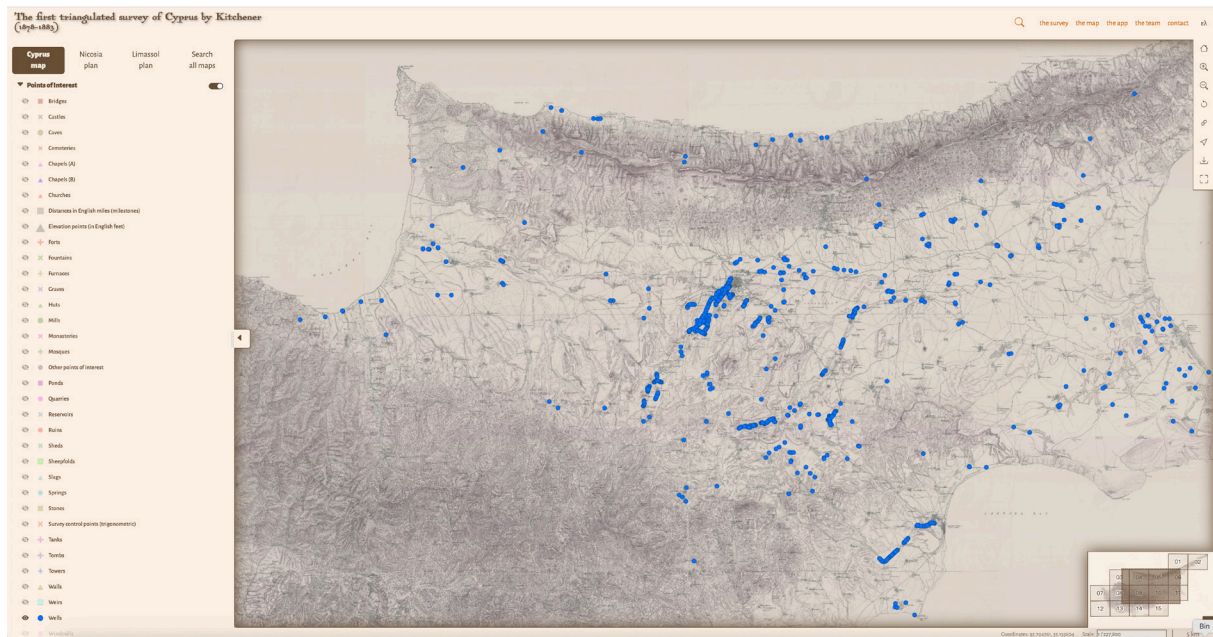


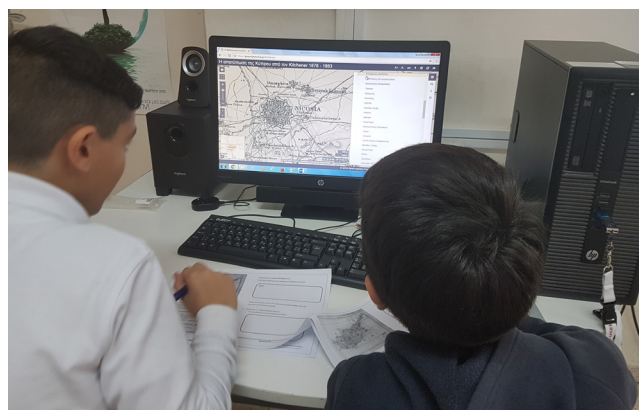
Fig. 4. Kitchener Map (2021): Points of Interest (Wells). © Harokopio University and Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation

b. Group discussion

*Which cartographic categories do you think will be useful in our investigation?
Which categories provide information related to plant cultivation?*

Notes:

During the implementation of the educational programme, we used the layers containing information on water resources: “Hydrographic Network” and “Points of Interest” (mainly wells).



Figs 5 and 6. Students from the 3rd Primary School of Palouriotissa (Nicosia) using the Kitchener map web application during the pilot implementation of the project. © Photos: Despo Pasia

1.3.6. Session 5: Visual Mapping of the Edible Plants that Were Present in the Study Area During the Past

Materials and equipment:

- Paper
- Materials for the illustration of the plants identified on the website “Economy, environment, and landscape in the Cypriot *longue durée*”. During the pilot implementation, both pencils and fine-tip pens were used to differentiate the plants of earlier times from the plants present today in the school area
- Prints of images of the plants found on the aforementioned site that are not thriving during the implementation of the project

Activity

Plants that were present in the study area in the past, and may still be present today, blossom and bear fruit at specific times of year. As it is impossible to study all the plants in situ during the implementation of the educational programme, we use high-quality prints as reference images for their visual representation (fig. 7).

- a. Discuss with the group how the visual illustration can distinguish between the plants currently found in the study area and those that were present in the past.
- b. We share the prints and create a visual study or rendering of plants that were present in the past, following the method chosen in the previous step.



Fig. 7. Visual representation of the plants identified during the pilot implementation of the project with students from the 3rd Primary School of Palouriotissa (Nicosia).
© Photo: Despo Pasia

1.3.7. Session 6: Creating QR Codes

Materials and equipment:

- Smart mobile devices (phones or tablets)
- Paper

Activity

a. We distribute cards to the smaller groups listing the following topics that the larger group worked on during the project:

- Where do we encounter Nature
- Species of edible plants in our neighbourhood
- Edible plants in our neighbourhood before the 21st century
- The map of Kitchener
- How we used the map

We discuss any new thoughts, feelings, and insights from the project. Each member of the group chooses a card as the topic for the text they will create, which will then be converted into a QR code.

b. We initially experiment on paper, with plain text, riddles, limericks, haikus or other forms.

c. The writings are discussed in the smaller group. Together with the members, we consider which texts will be most interesting to the audience who will see the final work. Selected examples are then presented to the larger group.

It is important that the texts do not exceed ten words.

d. The final texts are converted into QR codes and emailed to the group leader for printing.

Notes:

For guidance on the Limerick form, see:

<https://poetry4kids.com/lessons/how-to-write-a-limerick/>

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-limerick>

For guidance on the Haiku form, see:

<https://poetry4kids.com/lessons/how-to-write-a-haiku/>

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-haiku-in-4-easy-steps>

1.3.8. Session 7: Closing of the Project

Activity

- a. In the smaller groups and/or the entire group, we brainstorm about:
 - how we can illustrate the changes in our neighbourhood and in the plants that appear there
 - how we can turn this into a visual component: a picture, a 3D model, or a visual installation
 - how we can incorporate a map element into our work
 - how we can achieve the above using the materials at our disposal
- b. Group members (working individually or in smaller groups) create drafts for the final project. Some related projects by other artists are shown in this textbook, on pages 32-37.
- c. The final decisions are made
- d. Creating and completing the work (or works).

Example

The final project of the pilot educational programme takes the form of a “stratigraphy”, i.e. the image we would see in a cross-section of an archaeological excavation where we can observe changes from the oldest to the newest level. At the lowest level of the project is a map of Kitchener, followed by representations of edible plants from the past, representations from the present, and, at the highest level, examples of our everyday contact with images of nature through computer games and television. The project also includes QR codes from the process (fig. 8).



Fig. 8. "From Urban Nature to Virtual" (mixed media, 180 x 180 cm). Collective work by students of the 3rd Primary School of Palouriotissa (Nicosia, 2017-2018). The work is displayed in the school's premises.
© Photo: Despo Pasia

Educational Programme 2

for young people (15-20 years old),
applicable to formal secondary and tertiary education
as well as non-formal education



Fig. 9. [Untitled] (watercolour on paper, 30 x 40 cm), 2018. Work by Stalo Simeou, student of Fine Arts, University of Nicosia. Collective artists' book. Exhibition at ARTos Foundation. © University of Nicosia

***The garden is the smallest parcel of the world
and then it is the totality of the world***

Michel Foucault¹

1. Michel Foucault, "Dits et écrits, Des espaces autres" (conférence au Cercle d'études architecturales, 14 mars 1967), *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, (5), pp. 46-49.

2.1. Learning Objectives

This educational programme aims:

- To reflect on our relationship with the natural environment, particularly in urban areas, on climate change, and on changes in the environment of Cyprus over time.
- To foster ecological awareness of changes in the environment of Cyprus, as documented in maps and other sources from the research project.
- To use an interdisciplinary approach that links ecology, history, geography and the visual arts.
- To develop hands-on knowledge of visual mapping.
- To focus on the landscape (landscape painting) using different means: painting, drawing, photography, mixed media and moving image (video).
- To develop visual artistry within the group context (collective creation).
- To cultivate the understanding that it is possible to work on themes of history, cartography and the environment through the visual arts.
- To gain experience in field research.
- To offer a brief introduction to the use of digital tools.
- To create a group display in a public space (cultural or educational institution/organisation, publicly accessible).

2.2. Framework for the Development of the Educational Programme

A significant background to the development of the proposed educational programme consisted of the methodologies and practices applied:

- a) during the visual arts workshop “Virtual narratives and mappings of agro-ecology and community”, within the framework of the Xarkis Festival, 2017 (<https://xarkis.org/>)
- b) during the research and exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από ’σαι δέντρον έσαι σσιός”, ARTos Foundation, 2017, curated by Niki Sioki, Maria Stavride and Evanthia (Evi) Tselika
- c) during the courses Process and Project-Based Practice, Collaborative Art Practice, Public Art and Situational and Socially Engaged Practices, of the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia, academic year 2017-2018.

The educational programme *Flora Nostra: Using Art to Map the Flora Around Us* was structured around mapping palm trees at a specific location within the walls of Nicosia. This mapping was carried out by a group of 12 students at the beginning of the second year of the Fine Arts Programme at the University of Nicosia.

The concept can be implemented by exploring different classifications on the map related to land cover.² This will be decided by the instructor and the group. Workshops can be tailored to the needs of the person implementing the programme. The programme includes a series of six three-hour workshops and sessions. Individuals can adjust the number of workshops and meetings, adapting the activities to meet the needs of the group and the time available.

2.3. Workshops / Sessions – Working Plan

2.3.1. Workshop / Session 1: Mapping and its Visual Applications

(Refer to the Methodology chapter, under the section “Visual Mapping and Participative Artistic Creation”)

Activity 1: *How do we Analyse a Map?*

Questions to explore:

- What does it look like to you?
- Which region does it depict? In what era is this region shown?
- What is the map made of? What materials are used?
- What kinds of symbols and illustrations are used on the map?
- Who made it?
- When was it made? (Note: this question is not always identical to “In what era is this region shown?”)
- For what purpose or use do you think the map was made? Who are its potential readers?
- Why do we make a map? (Refer to the Methodology chapter)
- What information does the map give us about this region?

2. For example, using the web application “The first triangulated survey of Cyprus by Kitchener (1878-1883)” (<https://kitchener.hua.gr/en>), we can select the thematic layer “Land Cover” and thus explore data on flora, such as: Vineyards, Sparse mixed wooded area without coniferous vegetation, Arboreal crop or utilisation, Cultivated crop (arboreal or other), Dense mixed wooded area, Dense mixed wooded area with coniferous vegetation, Chiftlik, Aquatic riverside vegetation (arboreal or other), High probability of crop (arboreal or other), Palm trees.

Exercise

- How do we make a map?
- How do we edit a map? (It would help to hand out printed maps to the group showing our region, which could be obtained free of charge from a local tourist information centre or tourist office.)
- What does a map show about the environment of a particular place in the past? What was nature like then, and what is it like now? (This is the first reference to Kitchener's map. We can draw information from the research project website, in the section "The British 1883 trigonometrical survey of Cyprus by Horatio Herbert Kitchener", <https://ecoland.hua.gr/en/sources/#1883>).
- What does it reveal about the nature around us, then and now?
- Are there really gaps in the map that look like this? Let us consider what they look like during the winter.

When we consider the relationship between map-making and artistic practice, that is, the relationship between cartography and the visual arts, certain technical questions arise that concern both fields: What do we choose as content? Where do we focus? Which creative media and morphological elements do we use (e.g. line patterns, colour, symbols), that is, elements that determine form, composition, context and perspective?

Activity 2: Description of the Educational Programme to the Participants

We ensure that the group understands the process, the group exercises, the individual artistic experimentation and the development of a group display to be integrated into a public space or cultural institution/museum. During this process it is important to encourage free use of the available visual media, so that there is freedom for experimentation (e.g. drawing, painting, photography, video, collage, mixed media and so on).

Activity 3: Defining the Scope of Exploration and Understanding the Kitchener Map

Web Application

Visit the web application "The first triangulated survey of Cyprus by Kitchener (1878-1883)" (<https://kitchener.hua.gr/en>) and briefly explore with the group the themes displayed on the left side of the page.

We encourage the group to activate the map layers so that the sub-themes are visible, as these are the ones that will provide the information we are looking for.

We explore the web application with the aim of considering multiple conceptual dimensions, such as:

- reflecting on the relationship between people and nature in cities and rural areas
- understanding that nature is all around us and that its protection is important
- considering how the natural environment in our region has changed from the time of Kitchener's mapping to the present day
- questioning the ways in which we contribute to the process of food production

We choose the region we will research and discuss the information presented on the map regarding our field of inquiry. We decide which data we will record so that we can compare it with Kitchener's time and draw conclusions about changes in the region's environment. During the pilot implementation of the educational programme, we worked on a specific location within the walled city of Nicosia, mapping the palm trees that still exist in the same locations where Kitchener's detailed plan of Nicosia depicts them.



Fig. 10. Kitchener Map (2021): Detailed plan of Nicosia, with a selection of thematic layers (Well, Large tree, Tree, Palm tree, Water tank, Aqueduct). © Harokopio University and Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation

2.3.2. Workshop / Session 2: The Landscape and the Natural World in Art

Through short presentations and discussion we reflect on:

- how we observe the natural environment changing over the centuries, using examples from the world of art
- how we connect the natural and the virtual in the contemporary digital age
- why in the Anthropocene Epoch, we pay so much attention to humans and not to flora and fauna

Activity 1: Short Presentation on Landscape Painting and the Environment in Art History

Landscape has been one of the most popular subjects in art throughout the centuries. Notable milestones in the history of landscape painting include the integration of landscape into Renaissance art, the flourishing of the genre in the 17th century (the so-called “golden” century of Dutch painting), and its clear incorporation into the art movements of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Albrecht Dürer’s watercolours from his first trip to Italy in 1494-1495, generally regarded as the beginning of the interpretation of landscape painting as a genre, were created as a travel journal (Busch 2001, p. 17).

Within the educational programme, particular attention is given to the prevailing art movements at the time of the creation of the Kitchener map, for example Impressionism (19th century), which developed in parallel with the invention and spread of photography. Impressionism, in particular, focuses dynamically on landscape and its observation through painting in open spaces (“en plein air”), usually using bright, vibrant colours.

The aim of the presentation is to consider how the new living conditions introduced by the Industrial Revolution in European societies prompted responses from artists and intellectuals, how these responses were expressed in art, and how they influenced the understanding of the changing environment in an era of rapid technological change.

The changes in the visual arts in the 20th century, driven by technological evolution and socio-political developments, shaped what is referred to as conceptual art and encompass clear references to environmental art and Land Art.

Activity 2: Short Presentation on the Visual Documentation of the Natural World: Botanical Illustration (or Painting) and Photography

Botanical illustration or painting is the art of representing the form, colour and details of plants. Similar to cartography, it combines scientific knowledge with artistic creation. On the one hand, botanical illustration must be scientifically accurate and therefore often involves collaboration between illustrators and botanists. On the other hand, representations of plants also function in a purely artistic way, either when combined with descriptions or when presented as artworks in museums or art centres (Buck and Rice).

Photography as a way of capturing landscapes and plants is a very widespread practice and has been used since the invention of photography itself. One of the first two photographs ever taken is Nicéphore Niépce's "View from the Window", which shows a blurred landscape of buildings.

A source of inspiration is the website Flora of Cyprus - a dynamic checklist (<http://www.flora-of-cyprus.eu/>), where we can find information and photographs of many endemic species of Cypriot flora.



Fig. 11. Nicosia, Cyprus. Photograph by John Thomson, 1878. © Wellcome Collection, 18992i

Activity 3: Discussion

In modern times we are witnessing rapid changes in our natural world. At the same time, we spend a significant part of our lives in the digital world. How can art respond to and reflect on rapid environmental changes under these circumstances? The examples below present some visual art approaches by Cypriot artists and researchers. It is recommended that they are shared with the members of the group.

Examples:

Cypriot Visual Art and Ecological Mapping

Visual art production related to the social ecology of urban nature highlights how we can understand the communities we belong to through our use of land, and how our relationship with it is being transformed. The gardens, plants, trees and countryside of Cyprus, along with the stories of past and present communities shaped through their cultivation, provide an opportunity to reflect on the formation of the natural world in urban and rural environments. Artists explore floral, botanical and social ecosystems through visual narratives about plants, as well as through people's stories about the flora of the place.

A. Art workshop: "Visual narratives and mappings of agro-ecology and community" as part of the Xarkis Festival, 2017.



Fig. 12. Map of the Koilani village made of natural materials, created during the workshop (20 x 45 cm). Work by Loizos Olympios, Xarkis Festival, 2017. © Photo: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika

B. Exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από ’σαι δέντρον έσαι σσιός” (Cypriot proverb). Curated by Niki Sioki, Maria Stavride and Evanthia (Evi) Tselika. ARTos Foundation, 2017. Participating artists: Athina Antoniadou, Antonis Hadjikyriacou, Penelope Vasquez Hadjilyra, Orestis Lambrou and Evi Tselika, Eleni Iakovidou-McLoughlin, Efi Savvides and *Flora Nicossiensis*.³

The exhibition included botanical illustrations of edible plants found in the gardens of Cyprus by the artist Eleni Iakovidou-McLoughlin. McLoughlin has illustrated native plants and collaborates with the Department of Forests of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment. Her works have been used for public awareness at the department’s Environmental Information Centres and have been published in scientific publications, such as *The Red Data Book of the Flora of Cyprus* (eds T. Tsintides, C. S. Christodoulou, P. Delipetrou and K. Georghiou), Nicosia: Cyprus Forestry Association, 2007.



Fig. 13. Works by Eleni Iakovidou-McLoughlin in the exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από ’σαι δέντρον έσαι σσιός” (2017). © Photo: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika

3. The visual art installation *Flora Nicossiensis* featured works by students of the Graphic Communication and Fine Arts programmes of the Department of Design and Multimedia of the University of Nicosia. *Flora Nicossiensis* is a creative educational programme designed by Niki Sioki, Maria Stavride and Evanthia (Evi) Tselika.

The same exhibition also featured items from the archive of Robert Desmond Meikle, author of the two-volume *Flora of Cyprus* (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1977 and 1985), courtesy of Mike and Helen McLoughlin. Born in 1923 in Northern Ireland, Meikle studied law but worked as a botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew) in London. His relation with Cyprus began in the 1960s, when he was commissioned by Kew to study the island's flora and prepare the *Flora of Cyprus*. Through extensive fieldwork, he collected plants from across Cyprus in 1962, 1974 and 1981 for his monumental two-volume work, which remains to date “the most well-written work” on the island's flora (Christodoulou 2013, p. 334).

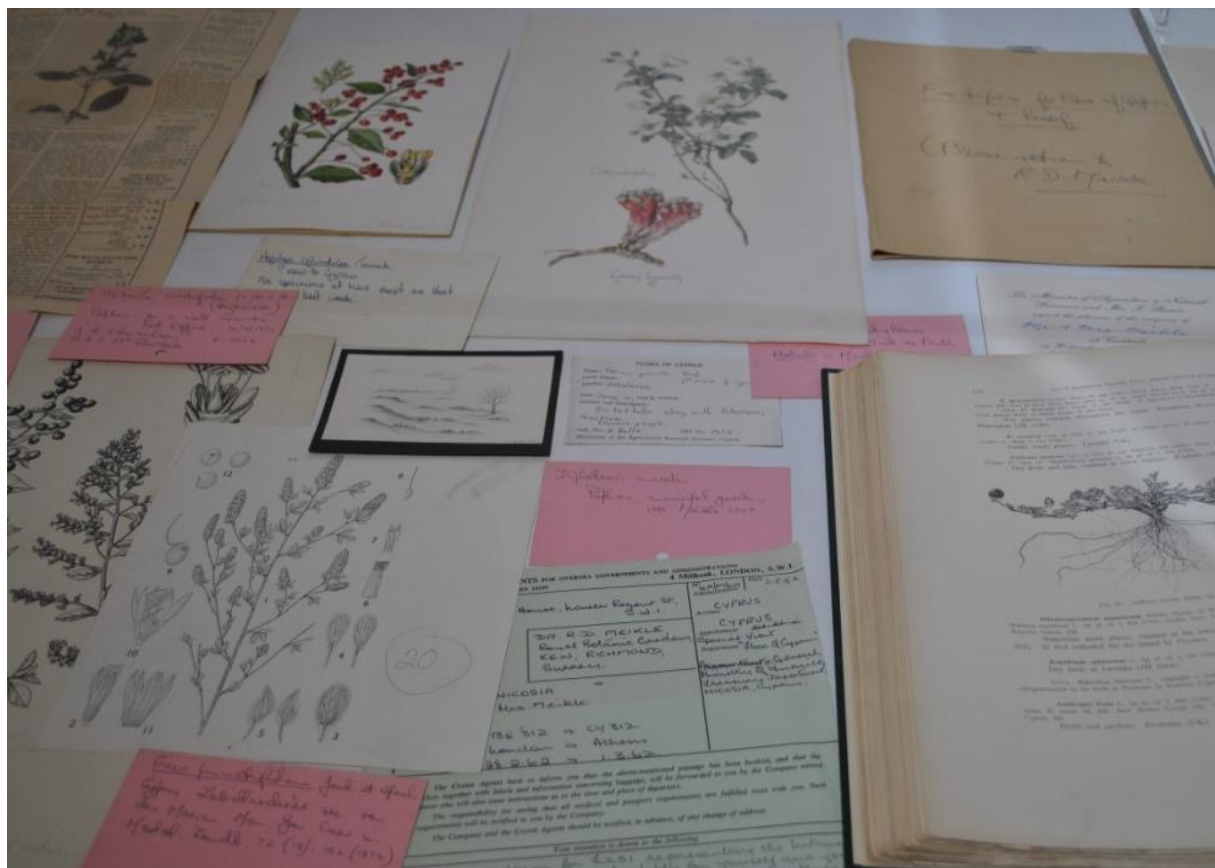


Fig. 14. Artifacts from the Robert Desmond Meikle archive in the exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από 'σiei δέντρον έσiei σσιός” (2017). © Photo: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika

In the same exhibition (2017) the following works by Athina Antoniadou and Efi Savvides were displayed:



Fig. 15. “The Prohibition of Nature and its Consequences” (Missionero paper, gouache, collage, 160 x 190 cm), created in 2013. Work by Athina Antoniadou in the exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από ’σαι δέντρον έσαι σιός” (2017). © Photo: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika



Fig. 16. “Garden”,⁴ installation with potted plants, 2013. Work by Efi Savvides for the exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από ’σαι δέντρον έσαι σιός” (2017). © Photo: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika

4. The “Garden” collection consists of more than 120 plants, given to Efi Savvides by domestic workers from South and Southeast Asia who relocated to Cyprus for work. By collecting seeds and plants from the countries of origin of these female migrants, the artist creates a context in which the movement of communities, people and their habits is closely observed. In turn, the host environment and its ambiguous attitude—specifically, who is allowed to reside in the country and for what reasons—is reflected in this plethora of plants.

C. Exhibition: *How to Make a Garden*⁵

Curator: Elena Parpa

Phytorio, Visual Artists and Art Theorists Association, Nicosia, 2012

“A garden is the result of the interplay of natural elements. It is shaped by the changing seasons, the light throughout the day, the life cycle of each plant, and the geomorphological conditions. How humans have at times dealt with these elements bears witness to the knowledge they developed by observing nature, the means they had available to control it, and their religious and aesthetic beliefs. It is interesting to note that the earliest gardens in history emerged with a vast desert as their boundary. In Mesopotamia, the Babylonians and Assyrians reproduced the image of paradise in palace and temple courtyards, planting oases of aromatic and fruit-bearing trees. (Excerpt based on Wiseman, D. J., “Mesopotamian Gardens”), *Anatolian Studies*, 33 (1983), pp. 137-144, as cited in the exhibition catalogue, ed. E. Parpa, 2012, p. 4.)

2.3.3. Workshop / Session 3: Field Activity - Group Visual Documentation of the Natural World Within the Study Area

The workshop focuses on collecting stories and creating images to form a visual art map that explores the concept of community and land use in the area. We are interested in how gardens with all kinds of plants, edible and non-edible, as well as trees and fields in the area, can help us understand the social ecology of the community and food growing in relation to the rural and urban environment.

Activity 1

In small groups, we explore different parts of the selected region by recording and capturing the natural world we observe, using a medium of our choice (drawing, painting, collage, photography or video). We use past and present maps, create virtual representations of the natural world, record oral testimonies and collect or locate photographs from earlier times in relation to the natural environment. (Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes)

Activity 2

In the studio, the groups create large maps and place the samples, pictures and stories they have collected on them. (Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes)

5. The following artists participated in the exhibition: Daniel Gustav Cramer, Haris Epaminonda, Phanos Kyriacou, Maria Loizidou, Panayiotis Michael, Polys Peslikas, Alexandros Pissourios, Efi Savvides, Socratis Socratous.



Figs 17 and 18. Exhibition of the results of the visual arts workshop “Visual narratives and mappings of agro-ecology and community” as part of the Xarkis Festival, 2017. © Photos: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika

2.3.4. Workshop / Session 4: Field Activity - Documenting What Existed Then and What Exists Now

Activity 1: Decide Exactly which Element or Elements we Will Use to Compare Kitchener's Map with our Contemporary Observations of the Natural World in the Same Area

The Kitchener Map web application, under the “Land Cover” category, offers the following information:

- Dense mixed wooded area with coniferous vegetation
- Dense mixed wooded area
- Sparse mixed wooded area without coniferous vegetation
- Palm trees
- Aquatic riverside vegetation (arboreal or other)
- Cultivated crop (arboreal or other)
- Arboreal crop or utilisation
- High probability of crop (arboreal or other)
- Vineyards
- Settlement
- Chiftlik
- Small settlement
- Military camp
- Sand areas or dunes
- Alluvial deposits
- Coastal cliffs
- Terraces
- Swamp, marsh
- Stagnant water

Observe the symbols and illustrations in the thematic layers (as presented in the “Land Cover” category) and discuss what would be interesting to explore. For example, consider the palm tree symbol that was mapped using the detailed plan of Nicosia, shown in the image below. Each member of the group chooses a symbol and creates a quick sketch based on their choice.



Fig. 19. The palm tree symbol on the Kitchener map, as highlighted in the web application. Kitchener Map (2021): Detailed plan of Nicosia with a selection of thematic layer (Palm tree). © Harokopio University and Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation

Decide What to Study as a Group

It is advisable to limit the scope of comparison to one or two thematic layers of the map, depending on the geographical region to be explored. In our case, we decided to investigate the number of palm trees in a particular part of the old town of Nicosia and to compare whether, in the locations where they are depicted on Kitchener's detailed plan of Nicosia (within the same geographical area), palm trees remain to this day.

In groups of three or four, record the palm trees in the study area using drawing, painting, photography, or animation/video. Each group is given Kitchener's detailed plan of Nicosia, clearly showing the palm trees, as well as a current map of the same area.

Activity 2: Mapping by Walking and Collecting Images

Example: Images of the old town of Nicosia and some of the documentation showing the palm trees



Figs 20 and 21. The students of the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia (academic year 2017-2018) on the field, within the walled urban centre, document the palm trees along with other elements of the natural environment. © Photos: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika



Figs 22, 23, 24. Photographs by a group of students of the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia (academic year 2017-2018): Miriam Gatt, Sophia Grammatikogianni, Nafsika Dimitriou, Evdokia Efthymiou, Lefteris Ioannidis, Eleana Ioannou, Kleanthis Konstantinou, Samer Basam, Elena Hadjigeorgiou. © University of Nicosia



Fig. 25. [Untitled] (acrylic on paper, 18 x 20 cm), 2017. Work by Miriam Gatt, student of the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia. © University of Nicosia



Fig. 26. [Untitled] (mixed media on paper, 30 x 40 cm), 2017. Work by Nafsika Dimitriou, student of the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia. © University of Nicosia



Fig. 27. [Untitled] (acrylic on canvas, 50 x 60 cm), 2017. Work by Sophia Grammatikogianni, student of the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia. © University of Nicosia

2.3.5. Workshop / Session 5: Collective Material Editing

Activity 1: Collective Editing

We present the material we have collected and choose how to display it as a group. There are several options we could choose to follow, for example:

- Multi-dimensional installation (as in the example below)
- Posters
- Reproducible map
- Visual art book
- Video
- Other media suggested by the group

The group collectively decides how to use the material and spends time preparing the exhibit.

In the case of the palm trees:

The group chose to create a multidimensional installation illustrating the number of palm trees still standing today, based on mapping carried out in situ. In our survey area, only four sites correspond to those where palm trees were shown on Kitchener's detailed plan of Nicosia.

The following items were used for the installation:

- group drawings of the places where palm trees still appear to be present
- hand drawn reproduction of the urban map of the study region we chose to survey, enlarged by using a projector
- screen for viewing photos or videos
- high-resolution printout of the specific geographic region from Kitchener's detailed plan of Nicosia



Fig. 28. Collective student project (Miriam Gatt, Sophia Grammatikogianni, Nafsika Dimitriou, Evdokia Efthymiou, Lefteris Ioannidis, Eleana Ioannou, Kleanthis Konstantinou, Samer Basam, Elena Hadjigeorgiou), as part of *Flora Nicossiensis* at the exhibition “Whoever has a tree, has shade - Από ’σαι δέντρον έσαι σσιός”. ARTos Foundation, 2017. © Photo: Evanthia (Evi) Tselika

2.3.6. Workshop / Session 6: Closing of the Project

An important part of the *Flora Nostra: Using Art to Map the Flora Around Us* educational programme is working with the material in the form of an exhibition, that is, creating an exhibition or exhibit focusing on the history of the natural world around us. The results, both of the group activities and of each group member’s individual artistic process, are presented in an exhibition or collective exhibit in a cultural, artistic or educational institution, in a public library, in the town hall or even in the street.

We collectively process the outcomes of the field studies and workshops to create a multidimensional installation or exhibition. This depends on how you choose to implement the educational programme.

Happy flora explorations!

[web links were last accessed in September 2026]

Greek-language

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Joseph Beuys	https://publicdelivery.org/joseph-beuys-7000-oaks/
Kathrin Böhm	http://www.myvillages.org/index.php?a=kathrin
Agnes Denes	http://www.agnesdenesstudio.com/works7.html
Fallen Fruit	http://fallenfruit.org/
Andy Goldsworthy	http://www.artnet.com/artists/andy-goldsworthy/
Mary Mattingly	https://marymattingly.com/
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Biographical Notes of the Educational Team and the Supervisors of the Research Project

Despo Pasia studied pedagogy, anthropology, psychology and museology. She has recently received her PhD from UCL (Institute of Education, Department of Culture, Communication and Media, University of London). Her PhD thesis explores children's experiences of encountering historical photographs. She works as an educational officer in history, archaeology and art museums, and also as a visual arts teacher in public schools in Cyprus. She has extensive experience as an educational associate in cultural research projects funded by the Council of Europe, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and cultural organisations in Cyprus and Greece. Her research interests focus on hybrid exhibitions, photography and photographic archives, museums and heritage education.

Evanthia (Evi) Tselika is an Associate Professor of Art History in the Fine Arts programme of the Department of Design and Multimedia at the University of Nicosia and Vice Chair of the Department. Her main research interests focus on art history, contemporary visual social practices, museum education and the history of visual culture in Cyprus. She curates exhibitions and educational programmes and has collaborated with various art centres and museums: Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, October Gallery in London, Museum of Art in El Salvador, Niteroi Museum of Contemporary Art in Rio (Brazil), etc. Her articles are published in academic journals such as *Visual Studies* and *Public Art Dialogue*. In 2021 she co-edited a collective volume on contemporary art in Cyprus. Over the last ten years, she has participated in and coordinated several research projects in collaboration with research and cultural institutions.

Christos Chalkias is a Professor of Geographic Information Systems/Science in the Department of Geography at Harokopio University, where he has already served for over 20 years, and Vice Rector for Research, Development and Lifelong Learning. He has also served as Chair of the Department of Geography (2013-2015) at the same institution. His main research interests focus on applied geoinformatics, geographic information systems, digital cartography, and the analysis/modelling of geographical phenomena and natural processes using geoinformatics. He has published more than 100 papers in peer-reviewed journals and proceedings of scientific conferences (h-index: 23, citations: more than 2000). Over the past 25 years, he has participated in more than 40 research projects, serving as the scientific leader in more than 10 of them.

Antonis Hadjikyriacou is an Assistant Professor of Ottoman and Turkish History in the Department of Political Science and History at Panteion University and an associate researcher at the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis at Stanford University. He has worked and taught at Boğaziçi University, Princeton University, the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), the University of Crete and the University of Cyprus. From 2014 to 2016 he was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow, funded by the European Commission, at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies of the Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas. He is an elected member of the Nominating Committee of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association, and served as the Committee's Chair in 2022-2023. His research examines Mediterranean trends in the Ottoman world and utilizes the tools of Critical Geographic Information Systems and Digital Humanities for social, economic and environmental history. His research has been published in international academic journals such as the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, *Turkish Historical Review*, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, and *Princeton Papers*. His studies have also been published in Greek and Turkish journals and edited volumes. His monograph, *Peninsular Island: Cyprus and the Mediterranean in the Ottoman Age of Revolutions*, is published in Greek by Psifides Publications.

